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COMELEC/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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By Christian V. Esguerra and Margaux Ortiz

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SUSPECTED/ A5

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Monday, April 19, 2004 ★★ 68 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 131 P18 website: www.inq7.net

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By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

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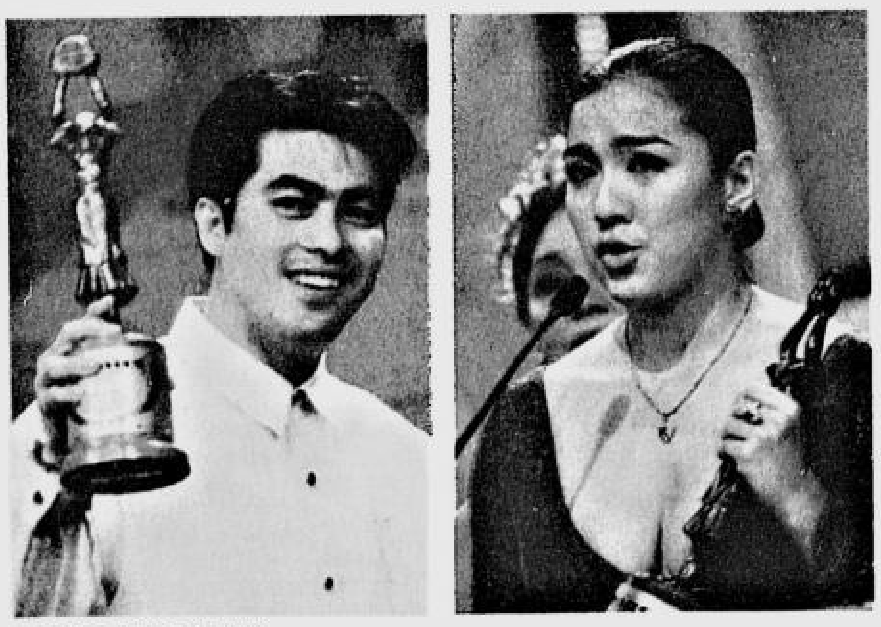
LAST CHANCE/ A22



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ELEKSYON 2004

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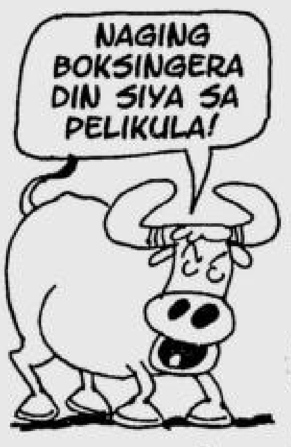
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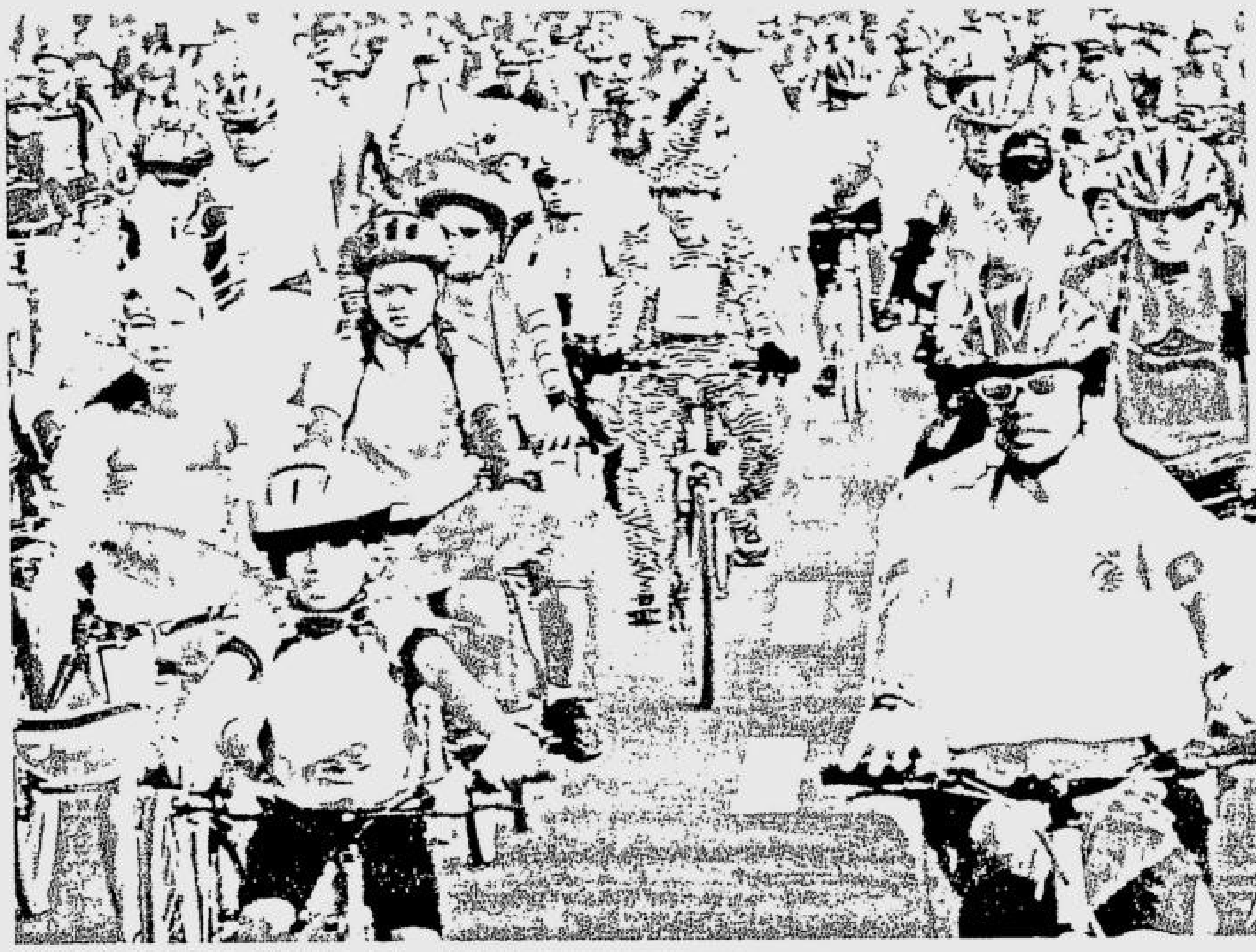

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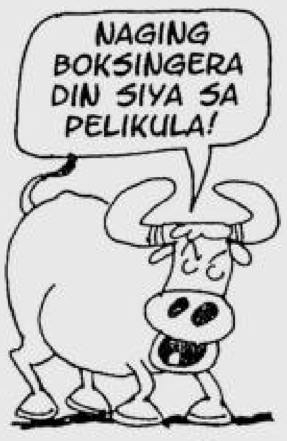

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FPJ ALLIES A21

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SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/19/04

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

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Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
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Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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But the endorsement was denied by TUCP secretary general Ernesto Herrera, who is running for the Senate under the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. Herrera, a former senator, described the endorsement as "senseless and preposterous."

"It is fairly easy for anyone, including spin doctors, to produce superficial manifestos endorsing a candidate," he said.

"The truth of the matter is that the TUCP and its affiliate federations had agreed not to make any political endorsements this election," Herrera said.

"In fact, two weeks ago, Sen. Noli de Castro's office supposedly issued a press statement claiming that the TUCP had endorsed him for vice president. We promptly and categorically denied this, and the senator's office subsequently disclaimed having issued the statement," he said.

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Party-list groups rap Bayan Muna, NPA links

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

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They challenged Bayan Muna and its allies to "compel the NPA to discontinue its practice of harassment and extortion. . . to dispel any doubt of (the party's) links with the NPA."

Bro. Eddie leads all bets—in text, Internet surveys

By Blanche S. Rivera

HE MAY be lagging behind in the regular surveys, but evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva appears to be the candidate of choice of Internet and mobile phone users.

Villanueva's Bangon Pilipinas party has gathered more than two million signatures and the support of 83 organizations through the Internet and text surveys.

An independent group called "Bro. Eddie for President" launched on April 1 an online petition for supporters through its Web site, www.broeddie4president.com. The site so far has logged 2,025,729 signatures.

Villanueva also led the other presidential candidates in a text survey of Globe and Smart subscribers with 26,761 votes, or 32.33 percent of 82,749 total voters, as of April 17.

Bangon Pilipinas spokesperson Luis Sison said it was not surprising that texters picked Villanueva because of his advocacy of consumer rights and opposition to the government's plan to tax mobile phone users.

In the text survey, Villanueva was way ahead of rivals Fernando Poe Jr., who received 16,867 votes or 20.38 percent; President Macapagal-Arroyo who got 15,992 votes or 19.32 percent; Raul Roco with 14,481 votes or 17.5 percent; Panfilo Lacson, 7,086 votes or 8.56 percent, and Eddie Gil, 1,562 votes or 1.89 percent.

The party's official Web site, www.bangonpilipinas.org, has had at least 67,000 hits even as various supporters had put up other Web sites such as www.broeddie.com.

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Cold Fact 4:

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MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2004

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Second FRONT PAGE

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They challenged Bayan Muna and its allies to "compel the NPA to discontinue its practice of harassment and extortion. . . to dispel any doubt of (the party's) links with the NPA."

Bro. Eddie leads all bets—in text, Internet surveys

By Blanche S. Rivera

HE MAY be lagging behind in the regular surveys, but evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva appears to be the candidate of choice of Internet and mobile phone users.

Villanueva's Bangon Pilipinas party has gathered more than two million signatures and the support of 83 organizations through the Internet and text surveys.

An independent group called "Bro. Eddie for President" launched on April 1 an online petition for supporters through its Web site www.broeddie4president.com. The site so far has logged 2,025,729 signatures.

Villanueva also led the other presidential candidates in a text survey of Globe and Smart subscribers with 26,761 votes, or 32.3 percent of 82,749 total voters, as of April 17.

Bangon Pilipinas spokesperson Luis Sison said it was not surprising that texters picked Villanueva because of his advocacy of consumer rights and opposition to the government's plan to tax mobile phone users.

In the text survey, Villanueva was way ahead of rivals Fernando Poe Jr., who received 16,867 votes or 20.38 percent, President Macapagal-Arroyo who got 15,992 votes or 19.32 percent; Raul Roco with 14,481 votes or 17.5 percent; Panfilo Lacson, 7,086 votes or 8.56 percent, and Eddie Gil, 1,562 votes or 1.89 percent.

The party's official Web site www.bangonpilipinas.org, has had at least 67,000 hits even as various supporters had put up other Web sites such as www.broeddie.com.

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By Jerome Aning

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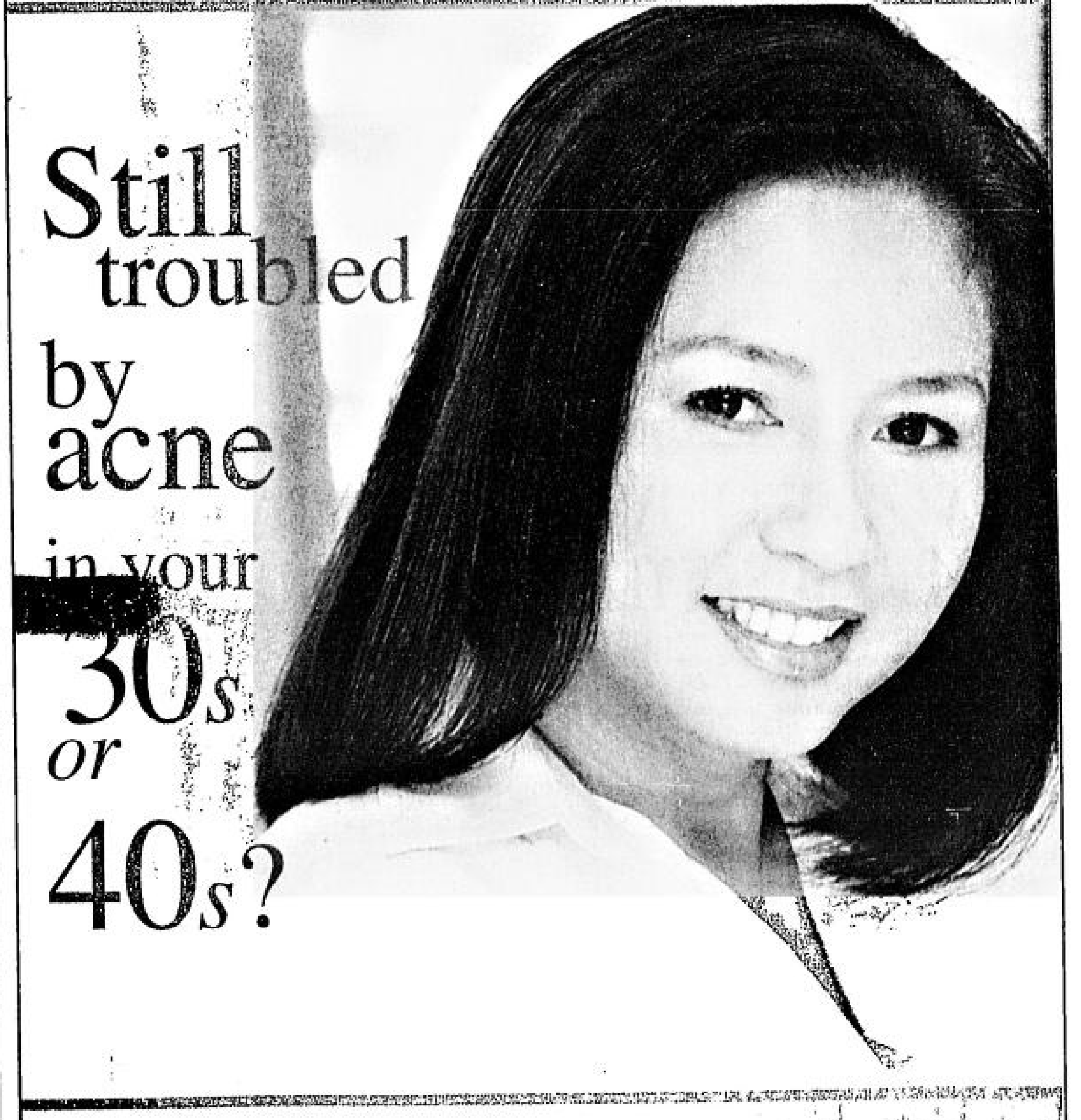
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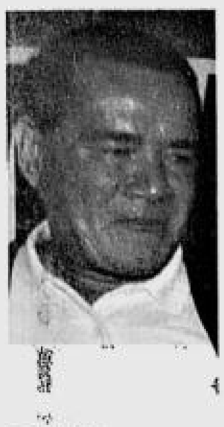

OSMEÑA

Promdi sticks to Roco

From page A1

QUIRER, adding that Roco's wife, Sonia, mentioned nothing to that effect either when they talked by phone yesterday morning.

Moved by the youth

When asked about his earlier statement that Roco could no longer win, Osmeña answered obliquely, saying he was moved by the strong sentiments of the Alyansa's youth members who continued to support their standard-bearer.

While politicians had mixed feelings about Roco's departure last week to seek medical treatment in the United States, Osmeña said, the youth had remained unequivocal in their conviction.

On Saturday night, after a Mass sponsored by the youth group in which they endorsed Roco's candidacy yet again, Osmeña talked to the group's leaders about the budgetary constraints of the campaign. He said they vowed to get by on nothing more than biscuits.

"I'm so proud of their willingness to sacrifice," Osmeña said. In the wake of some provincial candidates coming to him for help regarding financial problems, he said, the young people's determination "was so heartening."

Shortly after Roco left for the United States, the Promdi chair initiated a secret balloting among his party leaders to determine whom to support instead, should Roco be constrained to give up the race. The balloting was to end today, but Osmeña said he had called it off.

He claimed, however, the process helped him "a lot" in making the categorical decision to continue supporting Roco.

Aside from Promdi, Alyansa ng Pag-Asa is composed of Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko and Renato de Villa's Reporma.

One-on-one

Osmeña's bit of news might just put to rest all the talk that Roco was quitting the race. Members of Alyansa's slate had been suffering Malacañang's lightly veiled preening in the wake of the senator's sudden departure last week.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, yesterday hinted in a radio interview that the Alyansa could be rethinking their position. He urged the party's candidates to put the country's interests above all others when making their choices.

Bunye said a "one-on-one presidential contest" between President Macapagal and actor Fernando Poe Jr. would enable the electorate to make a better choice. "Maybe (Roco's party mates) are now thinking whom they will choose," he said.

No, they're not, Alyansa senatorial candidate Frank Chavez said also yesterday, because it was clear Roco was still in the race.

Chavez jested: "We told him, 'Don't die on us, or else we'll kill you.'"

"There are indications that he will be back before the month is over," Chavez said, prior to Osmeña's announcement.

Roco had "never" considered giving up the fight, his running mate, former Tarlac Rep. Herminio Aquino, added. "He has stated, time and again, that he's not withdrawing. We can't argue with what he said."

Reacting to Promdi's earlier call for Osmeña to run if Roco quit, Aquino said in a phone interview: "As of today, that is a remote possibility, [so] it's futile to field someone else."

Aquino, who was campaigning in Pampanga, stressed that any move to field a candidate, for any reason, would have to be decided by the party "hierarchy and leadership."

Roco himself, in a phone interview with dzRH on Saturday, declared that he would be back before the end of the month to resume campaigning, citing his doctors' "good prognosis."

Chavez, a former solicitor general, scoffed at reports that the party was a mess following Osmeña's secret balloting.

"The alliance is not in shambles. It is composed of people who have resolved to stick together," he said. "We are a living organism. They should not ... prematurely feed on our carcass."

He added: "The Alyansa is solid and on the go. We are not going to be discouraged by all misinformation being bandied around by those who want to take advantage of the situation. We are ready to go the distance."

Osmeña earlier assured him personally that he would stick with the party, Chavez said. He lamented that Promdi's secret balloting, which was "supposed to be a confidence-building inquiry" for the party members, was leaked to the media.

"I'm asking the media not to fan the flames of confusion," Chavez said. "[It's] unfair to the Alyansa people and the senatorial candidates who have good chances of winning in the elections."

In the radio interview, Bunye said a two-way fight would show voters a clearer and sharper contrast between the administration and the opposition parties' platforms and campaign tactics. Malacañang previously warned that a multi-cornered fight would divide the electorate and install a minority president.

Bunye said the President did not want to meddle in the internal affairs of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa. He said he was confident that if Roco could not pursue his presidential ambition, Alyansa supporters were mature enough to know what was best for them. He noted that the last time Ms Macapagal and Roco talked was shortly before the latter left for the United States.

"She only expressed her concern for his health and wished him a speedy recovery," Bunye said.

Call for sobriety

KNP senatorial aspirant Melanio "Batas" Mauricio yesterday called for sobriety among his party mates.

He urged his fellow candidates, especially, to refrain from making moves that could further fan speculations. Instead, he said, they should all wait for Roco to make his own announcement about his political plans when he comes back from the United States.

"Then, we can act accordingly," Mauricio said. "Until then, everyone owes Roco and the party loyalty. He's still the standard-bearer."

Instead of engaging in "useless, harmful speculations," he said, everyone in the alliance should pray for "divine intervention." *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

Bet reels after 'punch' from Susan

From page A1

vice mayor of Roxas under Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

The councilor said he was standing beside FPJ's wife, along with other local candidates, on top of a six-wheel flatbed truck during a motorcade. The truck, part of a 25-vehicle convoy, was inching its way through the crowd near the public market. He repeatedly touched Roces' arm to make her face the people who were calling out her name, Celino recounted.

She was clearly piqued and she showed it. He backed off. "I was surprised," Celino told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "If she misunderstood my actions, I would like to apologize."

KNP spokesperson Mike Romero promptly denied that the incident took place. He said the report was part of intrigues against Poe.

Celino was miffed. "Many people saw what happened. I can't lie to my constituents. How could they [imply] I'm being manipulated? I've been campaigning very hard for the KNP."

Aggravating the situation just a bit more, KNP senatorial candidate Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada issued a statement saying Celino himself subsequently denied the incident. "But I even explained to him how it happened," the councilor protested.

FPJ denial

The worst was yet to come: Yesterday morning Poe was on television denying that Celino—who is provincial chair of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, one of the parties in the main opposition coalition—was a KNP candidate.

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Promdi sticks to Roco

OSMEÑA

From page A1

QUIRER, adding that Roco's wife, Sonia, mentioned nothing to that effect either when they talked by phone yesterday morning.

Moved by the youth

When asked about his earlier statement that Roco could no longer win, Osmeña answered obliquely, saying he was moved by the strong sentiments of the Alyansa's youth members who continued to support their standard-bearer.

While politicians had mixed feelings about Roco's departure last week to seek medical treatment in the United States, Osmeña said, the youth had remained unequivocal in their conviction.

On Saturday night, after a Mass sponsored by the youth group in which they endorsed Roco's candidacy yet again, Osmeña talked to the group's leaders about the budgetary constraints of the campaign. He said they vowed to get by on nothing more than biscuits.

"I'm so proud of their willingness to sacrifice," Osmeña said. In the wake of some provincial candidates coming to him for help regarding financial problems, he said, the young people's determination "was so heartening."

Shortly after Roco left for the United States, the Promdi chair initiated a secret balloting among his party leaders to determine whom to support instead, should Roco be constrained to give up the race. The balloting was to end today, but Osmeña said he had called it off.

He claimed, however, the process helped him "a lot" in making the categorical decision to continue supporting Roco.

Aside from Promdi, Alyansa ng Pag-Asa is composed of Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko and Renato de Villa's Reporma.

One-on-one

Osmeña's bit of news might just put to rest all the talk that Roco was quitting the race. Members of Alyansa's slate had been suffering Malacañang's lightly veiled preening in the wake of the senator's sudden departure last week.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, yesterday hinted in a radio interview that the Alyansa could be rethinking their position. He urged the party's candidates to put the country's interests above all others when making their choices.

Bunye said a "one-on-one presidential contest" between President Macapagal and actor Fernando Poe Jr. would enable the electorate to make a better choice. "Maybe (Roco's party mates) are now thinking whom they will choose," he said.

No, they're not, Alyansa senatorial candidate Frank Chavez said also yesterday, because it was clear Roco was still in the race.

Chavez jested: "We told him, 'Don't die on us, or else we'll kill you.'"

"There are indications that he will be back before the month is over," Chavez said, prior to Osmeña's announcement.

Roco had "never" considered giving up the fight, his running mate, former Tarlac Rep. Herminio Aquino, added. "He has stated, time and again, that he's not withdrawing. We can't argue with what he said."

Reacting to Promdi's earlier call for Osmeña to run if Roco quit, Aquino said in a phone interview: "As of today, that is a remote possibility, [so] it's futile to field someone else."

Aquino, who was campaigning in Pampanga, stressed that any move to field a candidate, for any reason, would have to be decided by the party "hierarchy and leadership."

Roco himself, in a phone interview with dzRH on Saturday, declared that he would be back before the end of the month to resume campaigning, citing his doctors' "good prognosis."

Chavez, a former solicitor general, scoffed at reports that the party was a mess following Osmeña's secret balloting.

"The alliance is not in shambles. It is composed of people who have resolved to stick together," he said. "We are a living organism. They should not ... prematurely feed on our carcass."

He added: "The Alyansa is solid and on the go. We are not going to be discouraged by all misinformation being bandied around by those who want to take advantage of the situation. We are ready to go the distance."

Osmeña earlier assured him personally that he would stick with the party, Chavez said. He lamented that Promdi's secret balloting, which was "supposed to be a confidence-building inquiry" for the party members, was leaked to the media.

"I'm asking the media not to fan the flames of confusion," Chavez said. "[It's] unfair to the Alyansa people and the senatorial candidates who have good chances of winning in the elections."

In the radio interview, Bunye said a two-way fight would show voters a clearer and sharper contrast between the administration and the opposition parties' platforms and campaign tactics. Malacañang previously warned that a multi-cornered fight would divide the electorate and install a minority president.

Bunye said the President did not want to meddle in the internal affairs of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa. He said he was confident that if Roco could not pursue his presidential ambition, Alyansa supporters were mature enough to know what was best for them. He noted that the last time Ms Macapagal and Roco talked was shortly before the latter left for the United States.

"She only expressed her concern for his health and wished him a speedy recovery," Bunye said.

Call for sobriety

KNP senatorial aspirant Melanio "Batas" Mauricio yesterday called for sobriety among his party mates.

He urged his fellow candidates, especially, to refrain from making moves that could further fan speculations. Instead, he said, they should all wait for Roco to make his own announcement about his political plans when he comes back from the United States.

"Then, we can act accordingly," Mauricio said. "Until then, everyone owes Roco and the party loyalty. He's still the standard-bearer."

Instead of engaging in "useless, harmful speculations," he said, everyone in the alliance should pray for "divine intervention." *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

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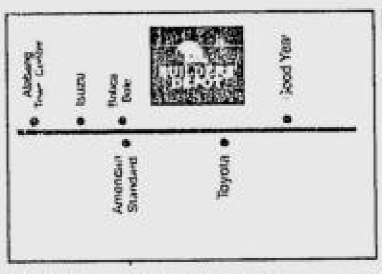

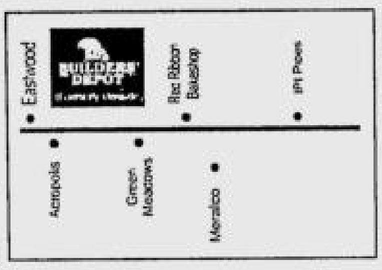

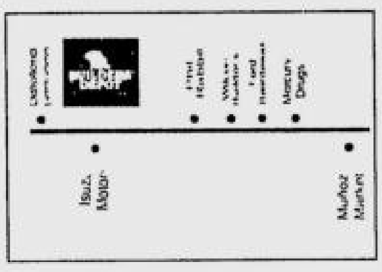

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Bet reels after 'punch' from Susan

From page A1

vice mayor of Roxas under Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

The councilor said he was standing beside FPJ's wife, along with other local candidates, on top of a six-wheel flatbed truck during a motorcade. The truck, part of a 25-vehicle convoy, was inching its way through the crowd near the public market. He repeatedly touched Roces' arm to make her face the people who were calling out her name, Celino recounted.

She was clearly piqued and she showed it. He backed off. "I was surprised," Celino told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "If she misunderstood my actions, I would like to apologize."

KNP spokesperson Mike Romero promptly denied that the incident took place. He said the report was part of intrigues against Poe.

Celino was miffed. "Many people saw what happened. I can't lie to my constituents. How could they [imply] I'm being manipulated? I've been campaigning very hard for the KNP."

Aggravating the situation just a bit more, KNP senatorial candidate Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada issued a statement saying Celino himself subsequently denied the incident. "But I even explained to him how it happened," the councilor protested.

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Suspected rebels fire at Shell office in Makati

From page A1

No one was hurt in the 4:45 a.m. attack carried out by three or four men armed with an M-76 rifle grenade attached to an M-16 rifle, and a .45-cal. pistol.

If confirmed to be a New People's Army (NPA) operation, it would be the second significant attack by the rebels on a Metro Manila target in five years.

Communist Party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal disclaimed knowledge of the raid.

"What will my comrades possibly gain from the bombing?" Rosal told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He stressed, however, that he had not yet received any reports from the field. "I only heard the report from the radio," he said.

Security tightened

To ward off similar attacks, police and the military beefed up security around the facilities of the other major oil companies Petron and Caltex.

The Armed Forces' National Capital Region Command met with Caltex and Petron representatives to discuss new security measures, said military information officer Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero.

The gunmen alighted from a taxicab and shot up the Shell House on Valero Street, said Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Southern Police District director.

Noble said the attack was apparently not meant to harm anyone as it was carried out early in the morning when there were virtually no people around.

Bullets cracked glass panels on a fourth floor unit occupied by Shell, he said.

The attack surprised guards and panicked people in nearby residential towers who heard the crackle of heavy gunfire, police said.

"This is a case of harassment," Noble said. "Whoever did this wanted to force Shell not to raise its oil prices." *(See related story on Page A3.)*

'This is a challenge'

Police recovered five spent shells, three from an M-16 and two from a .45-cal. pistol.

One of the shots was apparently a warning to scare away the security guards, Noble said.

"When the guards turned to look, they were gone," police officer Franklin Aparece said.

Noble said: "The attackers may have had a common motive: to gain the sympathy of people who are against the increase of oil prices."

He added: "Despite the Makati Shield—the augmentation of police forces in the city—this still happened. We take this as a challenge."

Metro Manila Police Director Ricardo de Leon said that security, already strengthened in recent months due to terror threats, would be further bolstered with additional mobile checkpoints.

Before the attack, oil companies had been planning to raise the pump price of gasoline by 70 centavos, citing rising crude oil prices in the world market.

Similar attack

Shell House came under a similar attack in December 1999 when alleged members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade hurled a grenade at the front of the building, injuring a guard and shattering glass panels.

In that incident, the attackers shouted, "*Para sa masa* (for the masses)," while firing rifles in the air as they fled.

Shell general manager Roberto Kanapi also said the attack appeared to have been timed to avoid casualties.

Pilipinas Shell is the local unit of oil giant Royal Dutch/Shell group, which is in a joint venture with the government to develop the $4.5-billion Malampaya natural gas project, the biggest foreign investment in the country.

No prior warning

"We had not received any threats before the attack," Kanapi said.

He said earlier this month that a further fuel price hike was justified to reflect recent rises in world oil prices. Prices of gasoline and diesel have already been hiked several times this year.

The NPA, waging a 35-year insurgency mainly in the countryside, has been blacklisted by the United States as a terrorist organization.

The 8,800-strong rebel group has stepped up its offensive in rural areas with the approach of the May 10 elections.

It has attacked power plants, businesses and government installations, and military and police outposts in the countryside but has largely spared Metro Manila. *With reports from Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Inquirer wires*

MEMBERS of the Makati Police SWAT stand guard outside the Shell Building after a gun attack by suspected communist rebels.

PDI PHOTO/RANDY HORMILLOSA

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 19, 2004
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: **Acts 4:23-31**
Gospel: **Jn 3:1-8**

Among the Pharisees there was a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you have come from God to teach us, for no one can perform miraculous signs like yours unless God is with him."

Jesus replied, "Truly, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again from above."

Nicodemus said, "How can there be rebirth for a grown man? Who could go back to his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "Truly, I say to you: No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Because of this, don't be surprised when I say: 'You must be born again from above.'

"The wind blows where it pleases and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Commentary

John's gospel favors a particular idiom. Though in the first chapter he had said, "the Word was made flesh," he can say in today's reading, "What is born of flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit." It has been characterized as a Neo-Platonist coloring: that is, a way of seeing and thinking that owes much to Greek philosophy and culture. His dualism is part of this picture.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the greatest of 20th-century theologians, wrote that the medieval mystics never entirely freed themselves from the Neo-Platonic legacy (and that in fact Thérèse of Lisieux was the first). Yet there is a medieval, Julian of Norwich, who can write like this:

"When our soul is breathed into our body, bringing our senses to life, then mercy and grace immediately begin to work, caring for us and protecting us with pity and love. At the same time the Holy Spirit takes our faith and in it forms the hope that when we have grown and become mature in the Holy Spirit, we shall return to our essential being above, to the powerful goodness of Christ. In this way I understood that our physical nature is grounded in God's nature, mercy, and grace—a grounding which enables us to receive gifts that lead us on to eternal life. I saw with absolute certainty that our being is in God. What is more, I saw that God is in our physical nature, too. From the beginning of time God ordained that the moment we became physical beings, at that same moment we would become the city of God."

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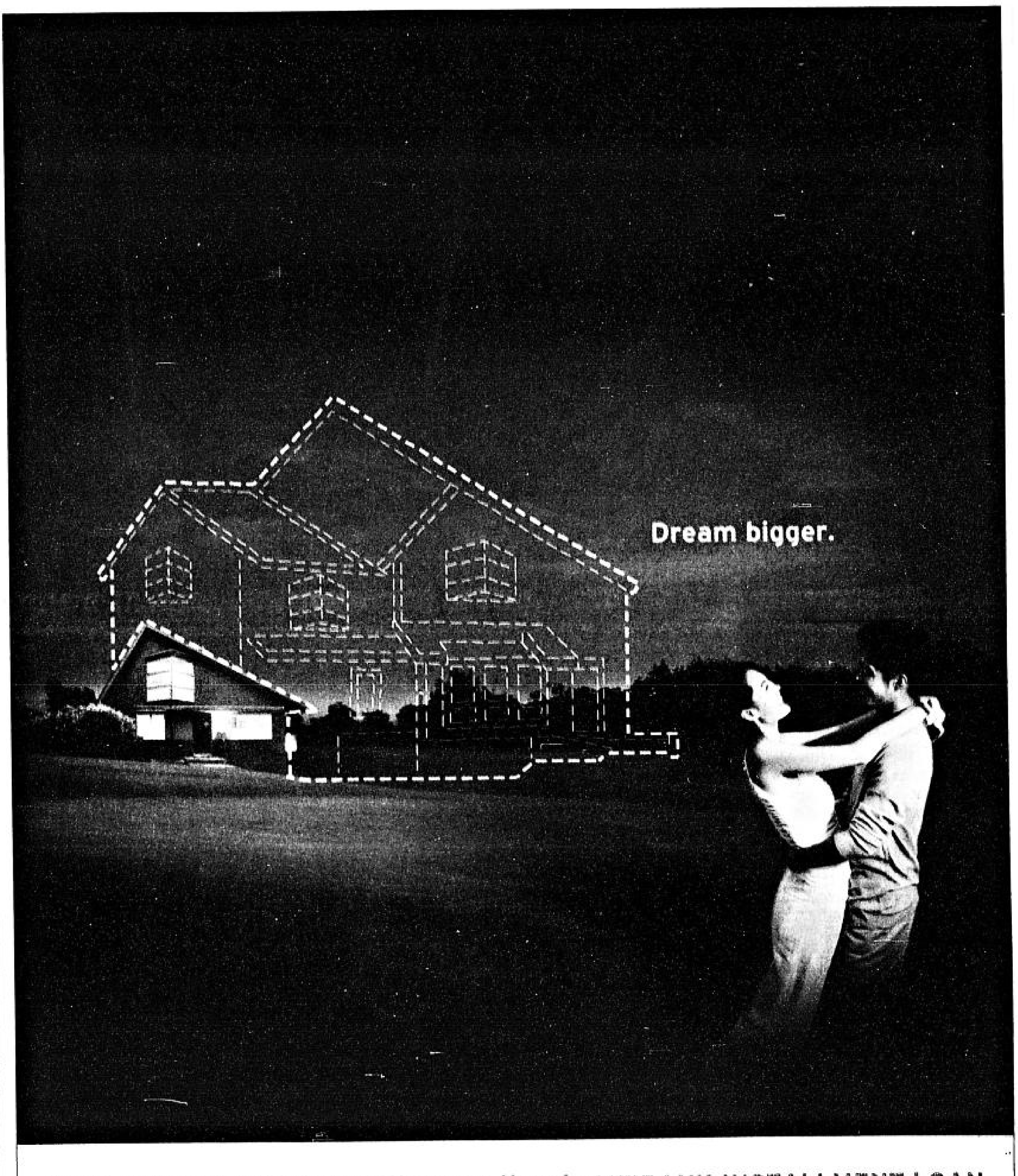
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He stressed, however, that he had not yet received any reports from the field. "I only heard the report from the radio," he said.

Security tightened

To ward off similar attacks, police and the military beefed up security around the facilities of the other major oil companies Petron and Caltex.

The Armed Forces' National Capital Region Command met with Caltex and Petron representatives to discuss new security measures, said military information officer Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero.

The gunmen alighted from a taxicab and shot up the Shell House on Valero Street, said Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Southern Police District director.

Noble said the attack was apparently not meant to harm anyone as it was carried out early in the morning when there were virtually no people around.

Bullets cracked glass panels on a fourth floor unit occupied by Shell, he said.

The attack surprised guards and panicked people in nearby residential towers who heard the crackle of heavy gunfire, police said.

"This is a case of harassment," Noble said. "Whoever did this wanted to force Shell not to raise its oil prices." *(See related story on Page A3.)*

'This is a challenge'

Police recovered five spent shells, three from an M-16 and two from a .45-cal. pistol.

One of the shots was apparently a warning to scare away the security guards, Noble said.

"When the guards turned to look, they were gone," police officer Franklin Aparece said.

Noble said: "The attackers may have had a common motive: to gain the sympathy of people who are against the increase of oil prices."

He added: "Despite the Makati Shield—the augmentation of police forces in the city—this still happened. We take this as a challenge."

Metro Manila Police Director Ricardo de Leon said that security, already strengthened in recent months due to terror threats, would be further bolstered with additional mobile checkpoints.

Before the attack, oil companies had been planning to raise the pump price of gasoline by 70 centavos, citing rising crude oil prices in the world market.

Similar attack

Shell House came under a similar attack in December 1999 when alleged members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade hurled a grenade at the front of the building, injuring a guard and shattering glass panels.

In that incident, the attackers shouted, "*Para sa masa* (for the masses)," while firing rifles in the air as they fled.

Shell general manager Roberto Kanapi also said the attack appeared to have been timed to avoid casualties.

Pilipinas Shell is the local unit of oil giant Royal Dutch/Shell group, which is in a joint venture with the government to develop the $4.5-billion Malampaya natural gas project, the biggest foreign investment in the country.

No prior warning

"We had not received any threats before the attack," Kanapi said.

He said earlier this month that a further fuel price hike was justified to reflect recent rises in world oil prices. Prices of gasoline and diesel have already been hiked several times this year.

The NPA, waging a 35-year insurgency mainly in the countryside, has been blacklisted by the United States as a terrorist organization.

The 8,800-strong rebel group has stepped up its offensive in rural areas with the approach of the May 10 elections.

It has attacked power plants, businesses and government installations, and military and police outposts in the countryside but has largely spared Metro Manila. *With reports from Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Inquirer wires*

PDI PHOTO/RANDY HORMILLOSA

MEMBERS of the Makati Police SWAT stand guard outside the Shell Building after a gun attack by suspected communist rebels.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 19, 2004
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 4:23-31
Gospel: Jn 3:1-8

Among the Pharisees there was a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you have come from God to teach us, for no one can perform miraculous signs like yours unless God is with him."

Jesus replied, "Truly, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again from above."

Nicodemus said, "How can there be rebirth for a grown man? Who could go back to his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "Truly, I say to you: No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Because of this, don't be surprised when I say: 'You must be born again from above.'

"The wind blows where it pleases and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Commentary

John's gospel favors a particular idiom. Though in the first chapter he had said, "the Word was made flesh," he can say in today's reading, "What is born of flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit." It has been characterized as a Neo-Platonist coloring: that is, a way of seeing and thinking that owes much to Greek philosophy and culture. His dualism is part of this picture.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the greatest of 20th-century theologians, wrote that the medieval mystics never entirely freed themselves from the Neo-Platonic legacy (and that in fact Thérèse of Lisieux was the first). Yet there is a medieval, Julian of Norwich, who can write like this:

"When our soul is breathed into our body, bringing our senses to life, then mercy and grace immediately begin to work, caring for us and protecting us with pity and love. At the same time the Holy Spirit takes our faith and in it forms the hope that when we have grown and become mature in the Holy Spirit, we shall return to our essential being above, to the powerful goodness of Christ. In this way I understood that our physical nature is grounded in God's nature, mercy, and grace—a grounding which enables us to receive gifts that lead us on to eternal life. I saw with absolute certainty that our being is in God. What is more, I saw that God is in our physical nature, too. From the beginning of time God ordained that the moment we became physical beings, at that same moment we would become the city of God."

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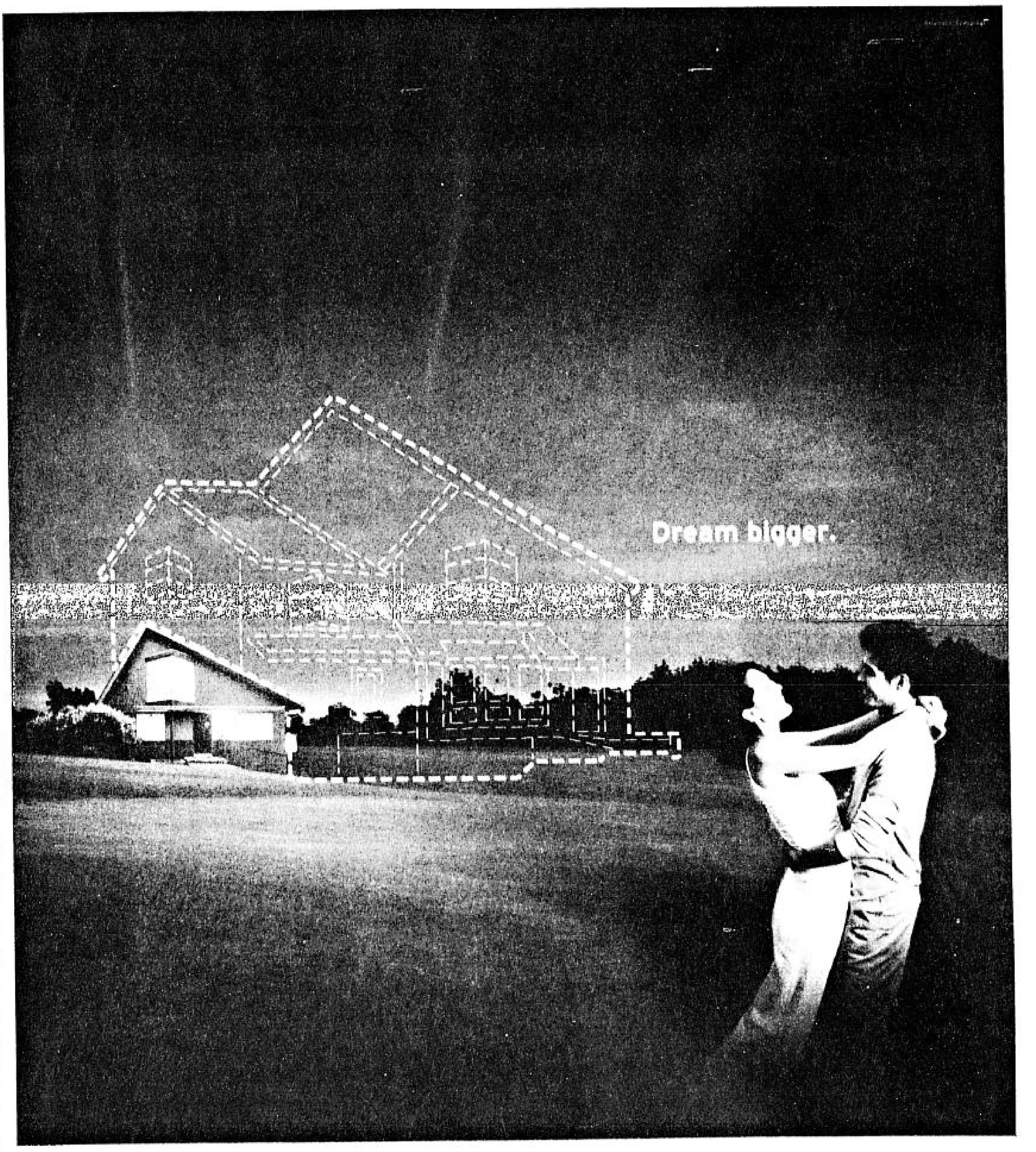
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Big row seen as Vietnam tourists head for Spratlys

EXPECT a diplomatic storm this week when Vietnam sends a boatload of tourists to its military outposts in the disputed Spratly archipelago in the South China Sea.

When Vietnam officially announced the trip last month, it prompted an angry reaction from China and a cautious response from the Philippines.

Despite warnings from Beijing about violating China's territorial sovereignty, Hanoi had vowed to press ahead with the inaugural trip which it had billed as a trial run.

Today, some 100 people carefully selected for their political credentials will leave Ho Chi Minh City for the seven-day round trip.

Duong Xuan Hoi, deputy director of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, said the boat tour, which is being conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense, had been in the pipeline since 1998.

The Philippines, along with China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei claim sovereignty over all or part of the Spratly Islands, which straddle vital shipping lanes and fishing grounds and are believed to contain vast oil and gas reserves.

Except for Brunei, all the claimants have military personnel scattered across the archipelago of more than 100 islets, reefs and atolls with a total land mass of less than five square kilometers.

Vietnam insisted on March 25 that it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the Spratlys, and that organizing such a tour within Vietnamese territory was "normal" behavior.

But China's foreign ministry called on Hanoi to respect a declaration signed in November 2002 by China and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to avoid any actions which may heighten tensions there.

The tension escalated a week later when Vietnam warned Taiwan that construction of a bird-watching shelter on a reef 6 km from the largest Spratly Island, Taiping, now controlled by Taiwan, could lead to reprisals.

Taipei shrugged off the threat and reasserted its territorial integrity over the entire flashpoint archipelago, which lies around two-thirds of the way from Vietnam's southeastern coast to the southern Philippines. *AFP*

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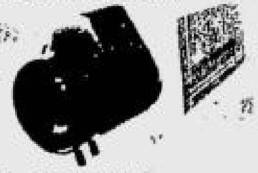

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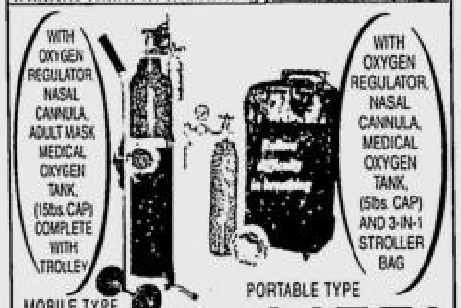
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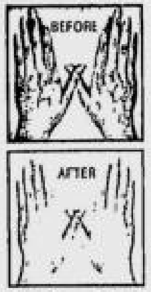

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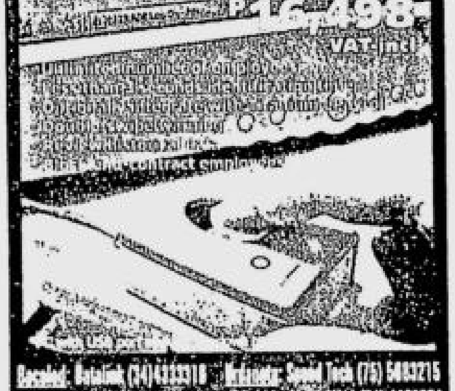

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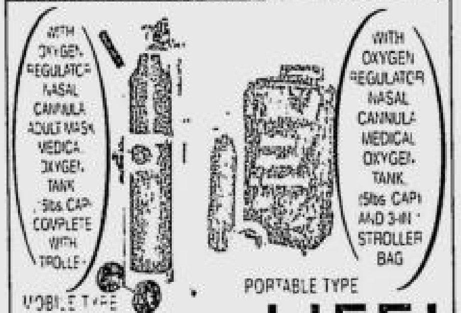

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Advocates to make population poll issue

AIMING to put faces to their numbers, campaigners for a rational and realistic population program will hold a massive rally on April 22 in Quezon City to show both national and local candidates in the May elections that they constitute a sizeable voting bloc.

The Population and Reproductive Health Movement (PRHM) will hold Hataw ng Sambayanan 2004 at 1 p.m. on April 22 at the Quezon Memorial Circle before marching to the Amoranto Stadium, where a program and concert will be held at 4 p.m.

A coalition of reproductive health advocates, the PRHM aims to show that there are actual persons attached to survey results that consistently show majority of Filipinos favor family planning and want to have access to services and facilities.

The coalition has invited to the event politicians and the public who realize the need to manage the Philippines' high population growth rate if the country is to achieve its development goals. It hopes to gather at least 10,000 participants.

By staging the mass action close to the May elections, the movement wants to make population, reproductive health and human development major political issues. It pointed out that available data show the link between poverty and population, with the government unable to provide adequate basic services to Filipinos, some 40 percent of whom are poor.

At present, the country's population grows at the rate of 2.36 percent while the average gross national product is four percent. With about three babies born every minute, the country will see its current population of 82 million double in just 29 years.

Organizers of the event cite studies, the most recent being the 2004 Pulse Asia survey on population and family planning, which show that "electorates will support rather than reject candidates who favor family planning, including (a) couple's free choice."

The movement will throw its support behind "candidates who will fight for genuine human development concerns through legislation and programs, and a progressive administration that would factor in population growth in socioeconomic planning."

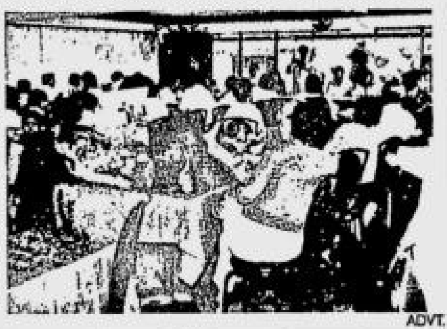
Comprising the PRHM are the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development, Friendly Care Foundation, Philippine Nongovernment Organization Council on Population, Health and Welfare, and the Foundation for Adolescent Development. *Linda B. Bolido*

More NGO P.O. Leaders Back Mayor Pewee Trinidad Vice Mayor Tony Calixto - Emi Calixto Candidate For Congresswowan Lone District P.C.

More Non-Government Organizations People Organization Leaders belonging to different organizations attended the general assembly meeting on April 12, 2004 at 12:00 noon held at Max Restaurant Baclaran, Parañaque City to express their support to Local and National LDP-KNP Candidates come May 10 election. Sonny Soqueco Official spokesman of the group said NGO + PO assembly supportive of the LDP-KNP National and local candidates headed by Re-electionist Mayor Peewee Trinidad, Vice Mayor Tony Calixto and Emi Calixto candidate for Congresswoman in the lone district of Pasay City. Ludovico Solina said those who came to the gathering were LDP-KNP candidates for councilors 1st district Mike Trinidad, Dr. Lito Roxas, Ping Petalio, Abel Alvina, Tonya Cuneta, Lito Ibay. And 2nd district Vergel de Dios, Linda Hilario, Ian Vendaviel, Red Stanberg. Nestorio de Leon, (retired Judge) Federation Political Affairs adviser. Ludovico Solina Sr. President United Federation of Homeowners Association. NGO PO leaders to wit:

Melanio Valledos; Hun E. Boces; Teresita Cruz; Nelly Villarete; Aida R. Paciente; Renata Montalban; Fe C. Casitas; Norma Lagrada; Josie Vinco; I. Solina Jr.; Rolante "Boy" Dela Cruz; Mariza Marcenido; Kag. Norma Candelario; Carrina Dela Cruz; Sest Arcallan; Mike O. Mohinay; Alvin Domingo; Tom Pilar; Ronald Langub; Bennijardi Benitez; Greg Baleta; Carmen Baleta; Teresita Millares; Sonny Sogueco; Lamberto Capili; Armida R. Candeña; Encarnacion Lagada; Editha I. Sm; Locendos C. Re; Caridad C. Añano; Dominador T. Lolong; Roberto Bautista; Mr. Gudiales; Arcelyn Bumagut; Amorasta Gaspar; Naty Sayo; Belen Lirio; Felisa Robles; Rytchel Reyes; Aida Albarracion; Ebesan Solina; YenCiron; Albesa; Willie S. Beltran; Jowie Bancifone; Marian San Miguel; Estela Locsin; Aida Valenzuela; Nestorio de Leon (retired Judge) said Mayor Trinidad, Vice Mayor Calixto and Emee Rubiano Calixto candidate for Congresswoman in the lone district must be given in new terms to complete his Pro-Poor and Peace and Order Projects like the Anti-Drug War, Pagpapatuloy ng tunay na kakayahan at hindi bagong simula basta lamang o kung sino lamang, Solina said. Solina said Federations has at least 45,000 card bearing membership which include United Federation of Homeowners Association and friends of the late Mayor Pablo Cuneta.

ADVT.



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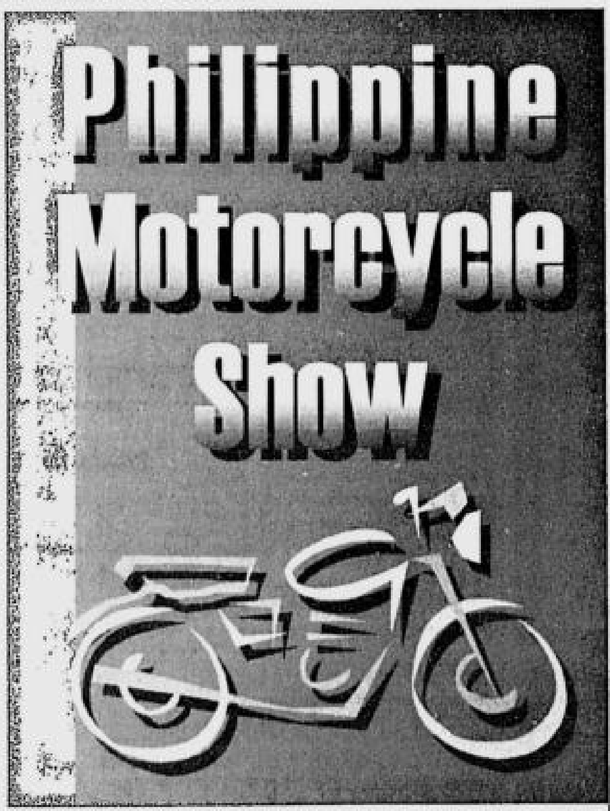

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Dear Celia,
Kumusta na Mahal? Miss na miss ko na kayo ni Junior. Malungkot talaga ang malayo sa inyo at sa ating bayan.
Buti na lang nagkakasama kami ng ating mga kapwa Pinoy dito at nagvivideoke gamit ang Magic Sing PREMIUM na may WOW Philippines picture backgrounds.
Bilib nga ang mga puti at ibang foreigners eh. Kita naman nila, ganda talaga ng bayan natin. Salamat sa Magic Sing PREMIUM, ngayon taas noo kaming mga Pinoy! Syempre, bida ang mga Pinoy sa kantahan! He..he..he.
Oo nga pala Mahal, abangan mo ang monthly draws at grand draw ng Magic Sing Win & Fly promo, ha. Baka manalo tayo ng local trip for 2 sa Cebu, Bohol, Palawan, o kaya Davao. Lalo na sa grand draw sa July 14, Asian tour package for 2 naman. Ready ka na lang, ha! Korea, here we come!
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Fil-Ams hail SC ruling on their petition to vote

WASHINGTON D.C.—Loida Nicolas-Lewis, chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), has hailed the Philippine Supreme Court's decision directing the Commission on Elections to answer a suit seeking to clarify the right of dual citizens to vote in the May 10 elections.

"This is a promising development," said Lewis on Saturday. "With only a few weeks before the elections, I remained hopeful the Supreme Court would do the right thing."

Lewis and 11 other petitioners residing in the United States had filed a complaint on April 1 asking that Filipino-Americans who had acquired dual citizenship be given the same rights as overseas voters to vote in this year's elections. In response, the high court issued a resolution ordering the Comelec to respond in seven days.

Last year, Lewis spearheaded a campaign in the United States to encourage Filipino-Americans to avail of the benefits of dual citizenship, especially the right to vote in the Philippines.

When the Comelec published its list of qualified overseas voters, the dual citizens who had registered to vote found that they were not on the list. The Comelec had ruled that dual citizens were not eligible to vote unless they met residency requirements.

Since the Dual Citizenship Law took effect on Sept. 17, 2003, those who reacquired Filipino citizenship from that date would not be in compliance with the one-year residency requirement of the law before the scheduled May polls.

Lewis and her co-petitioners, through their lawyers, sued the Comelec for stopping them from exercising their right of suffrage. They argued that the intent of the dual-citizenship law was to give dual citizens all the rights of Filipinos, including the right to vote, and the Comelec had erroneously discriminated against dual citizens.

Other NaFFAA leaders who joined Lewis in the lawsuit were Alex Esclamado, Greg Macabenta, Armando Heredia, Reuben Seguritan, Gil Zulueta, Eric Lachica, Angie Cruz, Cornelio Natividad, Evelyn Natividad, Josie-Disterhoft and Ma. Mercedes Opena.

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INDOOR AIR VIRUSES MAY CAUSE COMMON ILLNESSES

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Studies show that indoor air can actually be two to five times worse than the air outside. In extreme scenarios, it can even be 1000 times dirtier. This is a very scary fact. Especially because at the average, people stay indoors 90 percent of the time. We believe that staying in is the best way to protect ourselves from disease-causing viruses outside, but this is not the case.

Air pollution is not limited to the thick, black smoke that cars, factories, and trash burning emit.

Inside our homes are miniscule dust mites, molds, bacteria and some of the most common viruses.

Alarmingly, we breathe them in. Some may cause allergies, common colds and even asthma. Air conditioners and filters seemingly give us fresher air. But the truth is that most of these machines do not remove the molds and bacteria present around us. This is the reason why we still get sick even if we stay indoors most of the time.

A unique technology makes good use of this natural phenomenon. By utilizing the negatively charged ions in the air, it is able to clear up the air and get rid of the contaminants present. The Sharp Plasmacluster Air-conditioner uses plasma to generate positive and negative ions surrounded by large numbers of water molecules. These are then released in large quantities into the air. The positive and negative ions, which are surrounded by water molecules, form cluster ions. These cluster ions drift about in the air and collide with mold, bacteria and other odor-causing molecules.

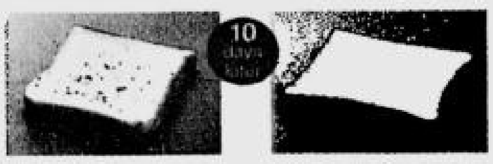
This process renders dangerous contaminants inactive. And what remains in the air are harmless molecules. It gets rid of molds, bacteria, dust mites and even unwanted odors from pets or trash. It tackles the culprits head-on, hunting for them even in the most obscure corners. The Sharp Plasmacluster Air-conditioner produces a shower of ions that is capable of reaching even stagnant air.

It reduces your chances of getting common colds, allergies and asthma when you're indoors.

WHAT'S NEW?

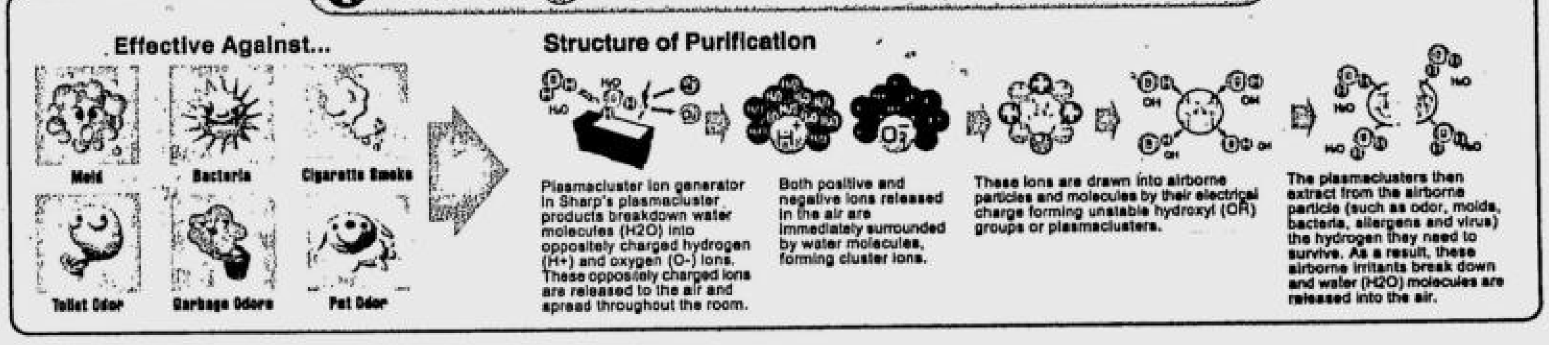
SHARP PLASMACLUSTER	OTHERS
Sharp Plasmacluster method ***releases positive and negative ions*** into the air which decompose and deactivate harmful airborne substances by chemical reaction. POSITIVE & NEGATIVE Ions Eliminate Germs Effectively	Other aircons have ionizers that release negative ions only. Negative ions do not decompose/deactivate harmful substances. It only activates cells by normalizing disrupted ion balances.

Without Plasmacluster Ion* With Plasmacluster Ion*



A demonstration of how the Sharp Plasmacluster prevents growth of molds.

Positive and Negative ions inactivate harmful airborne substances



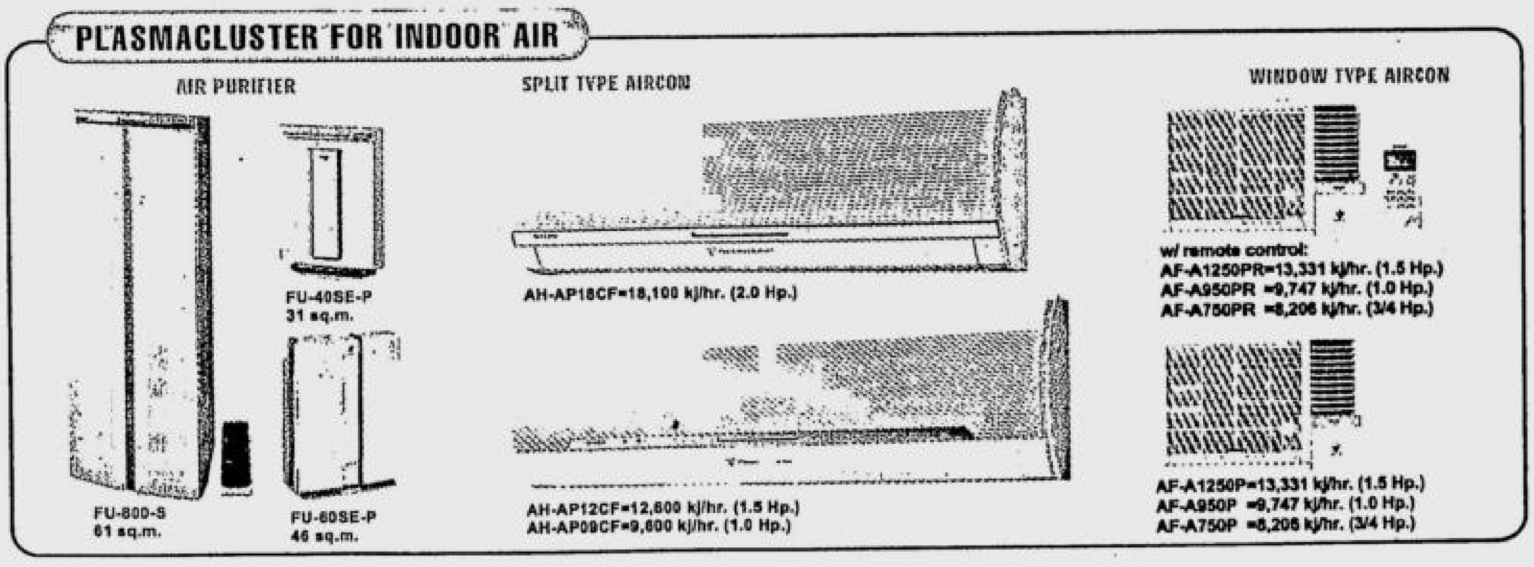
Plasmacluster ion generator in Sharp's plasmacluster products breakdown water molecules (H2O) into oppositely charged hydrogen (H+) and oxygen (O-) ions. These oppositely charged ions are released to the air and spread throughout the room.

Both positive and negative ions released in the air are immediately surrounded by water molecules, forming cluster ions.

These ions are drawn into airborne particles and molecules by their electrical charge forming unstable hydroxyl (OH) groups or plasmaclusters.

The plasmaclusters then extract from the airborne particle (such as odor, molds, bacteria, allergens and virus) the hydrogen they need to survive. As a result, these airborne irritants break down and water (H2O) molecules are released into the air.

PLASMACLUSTER FOR INDOOR AIR



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FU-800-S
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FU-60SE-P
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SPLIT TYPE AIRCON

AH-AP18CF=18,100 kJ/hr. (2.0 Hp.)

AH-AP12CF=12,600 kJ/hr. (1.5 Hp.)
AH-AP09CF=9,600 kJ/hr. (1.0 Hp.)

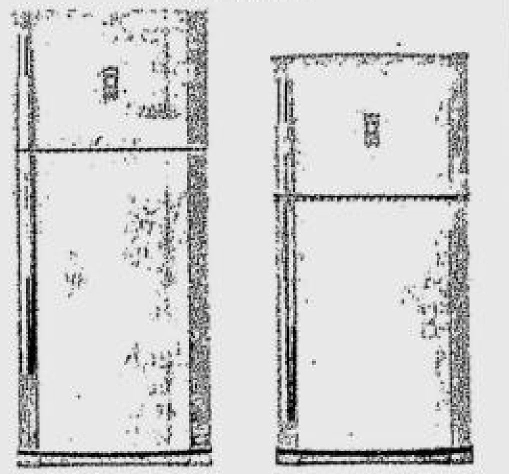
WINDOW TYPE AIRCON

w/ remote control:
AF-A1250PR=13,331 kJ/hr. (1.5 Hp.)
AF-A950PR =9,747 kJ/hr. (1.0 Hp.)
AF-A750PR =8,206 kJ/hr. (3/4 Hp.)

AF-A1250P=13,331 kJ/hr. (1.5 Hp.)
AF-A950P =9,747 kJ/hr. (1.0 Hp.)
AF-A750P =8,206 kJ/hr. (3/4 Hp.)

PLASMACLUSTER FOR FOOD

REFRIGERATOR



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JAPAN
Kitasato Research Center of Environmental Science

CHINA
Shanghai Municipal Center for Disease Control & Prevention

Ion Plasmacluster

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Israel assassinates top Hamas leader

GAZA—Israel assassinated top Hamas leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, drawing a threat of 100 revenge attacks from the militant Palestinian group rocked by another major blow before a planned US-backed pullout from Gaza.

The helicopter missile strike on Rantissi's car in Gaza City on Saturday stoked Palestinian anger already high over US President George W. Bush's statement this week that Israel could retain land Palestinians want for a state in any peace deal.

"The Palestinian Cabinet considers this terrorist Israeli campaign is a direct result of American encouragement and the complete bias of the American administration toward the Israeli government," Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie said.

The United States denied it gave Israel the green light to go after Rantissi but refrained from condemning the assassination, saying only it was "gravely concerned" for Middle East peace and stability.

Israel said it struck down a "mastermind of terrorism," hours after a suicide bomber blew up at the Erez border crossing in the northern Gaza Strip, killing an Israeli soldier.

Hours after two missiles slammed into Rantissi's car, killing the bearded Egyptian-trained pediatrician and two of his bodyguards, Hamas' armed wing issued a statement vowing "100 retaliations" that will shake "the criminal entity."

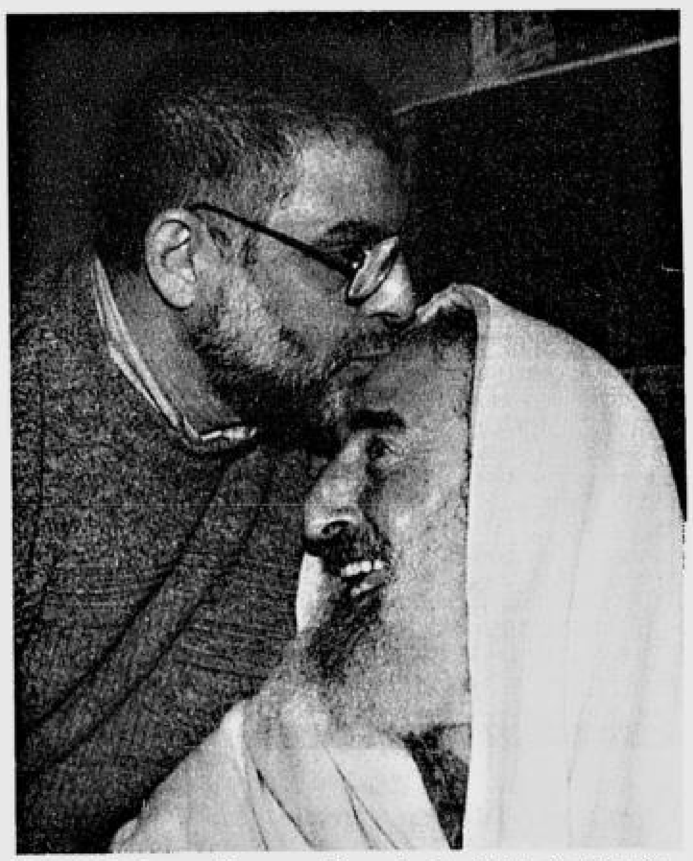
Tens of thousands of Palestinians surged onto Gaza's street promising to avenge Rantissi, 56. He was assassinated less than a month after Hamas' spiritual leader and co-founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, was killed in a similar attack from the air.

Many Palestinians viewed Rantissi as particularly hardline in a fundamentalist Islamic group that has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings.

"As long as the Palestinian Authority does not lift a finger and fight terrorism, Israel will continue to have to do so itself," said Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jonathan Peled.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan condemned the killing, saying it could lead to more violence in the Middle East.

"(Annan) reiterates that extrajudicial killings are violations of international law and calls on the government of Israel to immediately end this practice," a spokesperson said. *Reuters*



ISLAMIC Resistance Movement Hamas leader Abdelaziz al-Rantissi (left) kissing late Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in file picture dated Feb. 7, 2000 after Rantissi's release from a Palestinian jail in Gaza City. AFP

Israel still hangs nuke curtain 18 years after Vanunu blew whistle

JERUSALEM—For the past 40 years, Israel has sought to maintain a veil of secrecy over its nuclear capacity even if Mordechai Vanunu's revelations erased any shred of doubt about its possession of an atomic arsenal.

Ever since the 1965 inauguration of the Dimona plant in the southern Negev desert, the one-time workplace of the whistleblower Vanunu, Israel has consistently refused to deny or confirm that it possesses nuclear arms.

But even before Vanunu, who is to be released on Wednesday after 18 years in prison, leaked details of the program to Britain's Sunday Times newspaper in 1986, the official policy of ambiguity had left few people fooled.

Israel currently has two nuclear facilities, the reactor at Dimona in the Negev desert built with French aid and capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium and a smaller research reactor at Nahal Sorek, south of Tel Aviv.

Under an understanding with the United States dating back to 1969, Israel has committed itself to abstain from any comment on its nuclear potential and not to carry out nuclear tests.

In return, the United States does not pressure Israel to adhere to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which would oblige the Jewish state to submit its nuclear facilities to international supervision by the UN's atomic watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

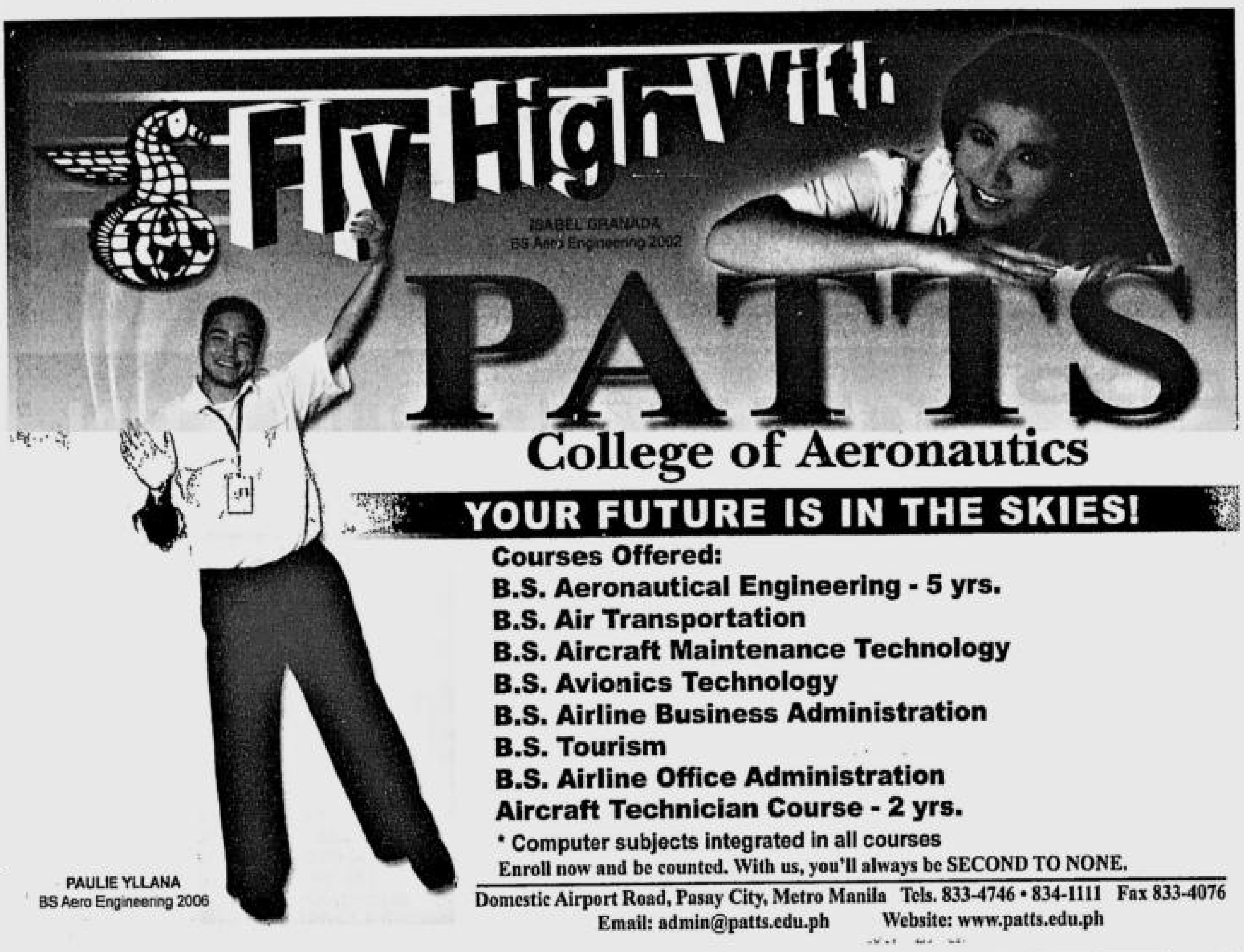
The agency's Director General Mohamed ElBaradei recently urged Israel to give up its nuclear arsenal, claiming it spurred a regional arms race.

"I am not happy with the status quo, because I see a lot of frustration in the Middle East due to Israel's sitting on nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons capability, while others in the Middle East are committed to the NPT," he told the Israeli daily Haaretz.

As an extra precaution, the whole program is also covered by military censorship, which the Israeli media regularly bypass by quoting foreign publications.

According to these "foreign experts," Israel has used its reactor at Dimona to produce around 200 nuclear warheads.

Peter Hounam, the journalist who first broke the Vanunu story for the Sunday Times, criticized Israel's "gall" for still failing to come clean about its capabilities but said it was determined not to upset its allies in Washington. *AFP*



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"SA KAALAMAN AT IKABUBUTI NG MAS MAKARARAMI"

SINO NGA BA ANG TUNAY NA BIDA SA MASANG MAMIMILI NG LPG?

Marahil ay nakabili ka na ng paborito mong brand ng Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) para sa iyong sari - saring gamit tulad na lamang sa simpleng pagluluto sa ating tahanan o sa Industriya ng iyong ginagalawan. At marahil ay napansin mo na naman ang malimit na pagbabago **hindi sa kulay ng apoy, hindi sa korte ng tangke, kundi sa bigat ng PRESYO.** Na dapat sana'y pababa sa bahagi ng taon na tulad ng kasalukuyan.

ATING ALAMIN: (Ang mga sumusunod ay ang kasalukuyang presyuhan ng LPG sa merkado)

	INDEPENDENT	OIL MAJORS (Shell,Petron,Total)	DIFFERENCE
11kgs	P 290	P 336	P 46

Mapapansin na di hamak na mas mura at tunay na kakampi ng masang Pilipino ang mga produktong LPG ng mga Independent Refillers kung ihahalintulad sa mga ibinibigay ng mga oil majors.

TANONG	*Baka naman hinde de kalidad ang inyong mga produkto?*
SAGOT	Parehong de kalidad ang lahat ng aming mga produktong LPG sapagkat ang mga ito ay nagmula din sa mga DEPOT ng mga kumpanyang Shell, Petron, Total, Liquigaz at iba pang mga MULTINATIONALS.
TANONG	*Baka naman kulang sa timbang o di kaya ay underqualified ang inyong mga tangke?*
SAGOT	Ang lahat ng aming mga planta na nasa 130 ang bilang ay may mga sariling Plant Quality Control at Safety Engineers upang matiyak na ligtas at tama sa timbang ng aming mga produkto.
TANONG	*Baka naman kayo ay mga Illegal Refillers?*
SAGOT	Iyan ang pinalalabas ng mga Oil Majors kasama ang ilan sa mga kakutyaba nito sa ating pamahalaan at pilit na itinatanim sa mga kaisipan ng publiko upang iligaw ang lahat sa katotohanang patuloy ang kanilang pagmonopolya,Cartelisasyon at pagsasamantala sa mga mga mamimili ng LPG. Sapagkat ang totoo ay lahat ng aming mga establisimento ay dumadaan sa ibat-ibang departamento ng ating pamahalaan tulad ng DTI, BIR, DENR, PAMAHALAANG LOKAL at higit sa lahat sa DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE).
TANONG	*Ang sabi ng mga OIL MAJORS, hindi daw pagaari ng mga consumers ang cylindro na kanilang ginagamit? Kanino ba talaga ang mga ito?*
SAGOT	Magpahanggang sa ngayon, ang halagang (1,200.00)Isang Libo Dalawang Daang Piso inyong ibinayad sa mga dealers / outlets ng mga OIL MAJORS sa pagaakalang Mapapasainyo ang mga ito, ay isang mistulang pagsasamantala lamang. Sapagkat ang kanila raw tinanggap na halaga ay isa lamang DEPOSITO at kailanman ay hindi mapapasainyo. Nakapagtataka lamang, dahil bilang DEPOSITO, nararapat na kanilang tanggapin ang mga ito ano mang oras natin magustuhan isauli ang mga cylindro kapalit ng halaga (1,200.00) na ating ibinayad, na taliwas naman sa totoong nagaganap. Sapagkat ayaw ibalik ng mga OIL MAJORS ang DEPOSITO kanilang tinanggap.
TANONG	*Eh, kung de kalidad ang inyong mga produkto, tama sa timbang at ligtas ang mga ito, at lalong di kayo mga Illegal Refillers, bakit di hamak na mas mababa ang halaga ng iyong mga produkto?*
SAGOT	Ang malaking halaga na ating ibinabayad sa mga produktong petrolyo ng mga OIL MAJORS ay dulot ng kanilang mataas na overhead expense at walang pakundangang paglustay sa bahagi ng benta ng kanilang mga produkto para sa kanilang pansariling interes na pilit naming ikinakarga sa mamimiling tulag NINYO.

Isang pagpapatunay nito ay ang pagtatatag ng Liquefied Petroleum Gas Industry Association (LPGIA) na kinabibilangan at pinamumunuan ng mga sumusunod:

COMPANY	REPRESENTATIVES
DOE	DIR. Zenaida Monzada - CHAIRPERSON
TOTALFINA	Roberto Velasques - PRESIDENT
GOODWILL CYLINDER	Merceditas Pastrana -EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LIQUIGAZ	Pal Dipangkar
PETRON	Joselito de Jesus
CALTEX	Strong Makabulos
SHELL	Borham/Tonito Gonzales

Ang bawat miyembrong kumpanya ay nagbibigay ng 0.03 sentimo bawat kilo ng kanilang buwanang benta sa LPGIA upang gamitin lamang sa pansariling adhikain tulad ng pagwasak sa malayang pamilihan (FREE TRADE) at sa mga INDEPENDENT REFILLERS at MARKETERS na ang tanging adhikain ay makapagbigay na abot kayang halaga ng produktong LPG sa mas nakararami. Napakaliit na halaga kung tutuusin huwag ka lamang magkamaling pagsasamahin
Tulad ng ekwasyon sa ibaba:

COMPANY	SALES IN KGS./MO.	AMOUNT
Totalfina	6,000,000 kgs x .03	180,000.00
Shell	25,000,000 kgs x .03	750,000.00
Petron	26,000,000 kgs x .03	780,000.00
		Total amount: P1,710,000.00 / buwan

Bukod po rito, hanggang sa kasalukuyan, bigo ang Department Of Energy (DOE) sa pangangalaga sa mithiin ng mas nakararami tulad na lamang ng pagpapatupad ng CYLINDER EXCHANGE CENTER na kung saan malayang makapagpapalitan ng mga tangke ang lahat ng manlalaro sa industriya upang masiguro na ligtas ang bawat CYLINDRO na dadaloy sa pamilihan ng LPG. Patuloy din ang pagbibingibingihan ng mga opisyales ng DOE sa hinanaing ng mga maliit na negosyante ng LPG samantalang lantaran ang pagkiling ng mga ito sa mga tunay na KONTRA BIDA sa larangan ng Industriya ng LPG tulad ng mga OIL MAJORS.

NGAYON KAIBIGAN, MARAHIL AY ALAM MO NA KUNG BAKIT LAGING BINUBUGBOG ANG BIDA?...

UPANG MAKAPAGHASIK NG KASAKIMAN ANG MGA KONTRABIDA!

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Refillers Association
Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers Association

ADVT

Tension still high in Iraq

BAGHDAD—US forces waited outside Najaf on Sunday with no sign of a breakthrough in efforts to avert a bloody confrontation with rebel cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in an Iraqi city holy to the world's Shiite Muslims.

Fallujah, Iraq's other main flashpoint and a bastion for Sunni Muslim insurgents, was enjoying a second day of calm.

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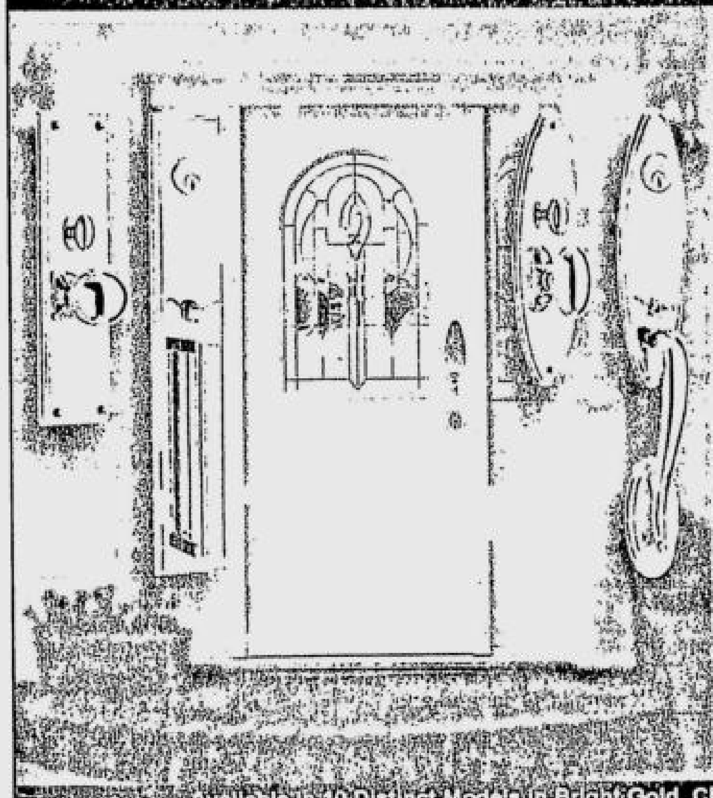

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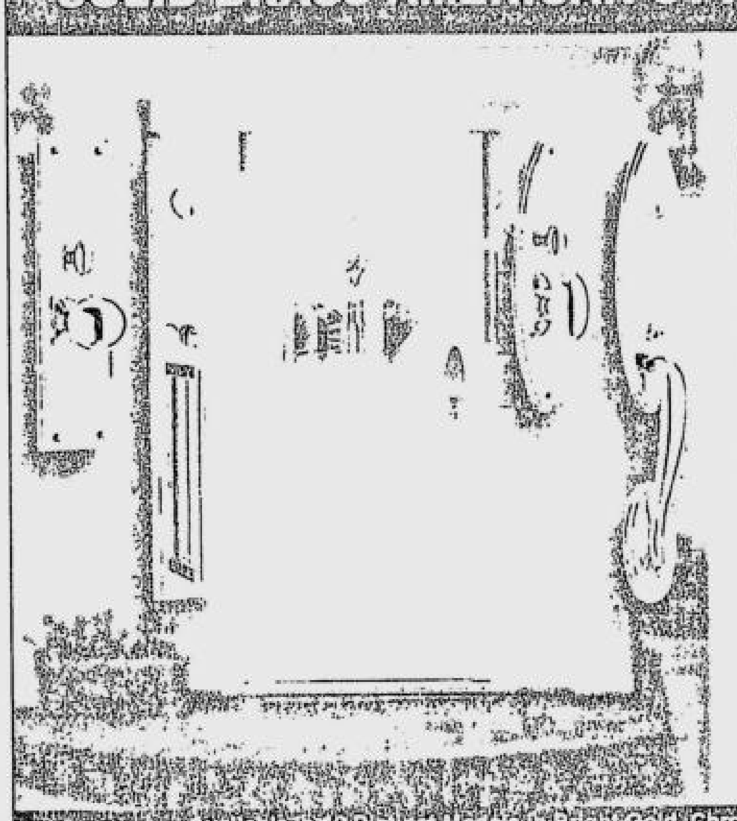

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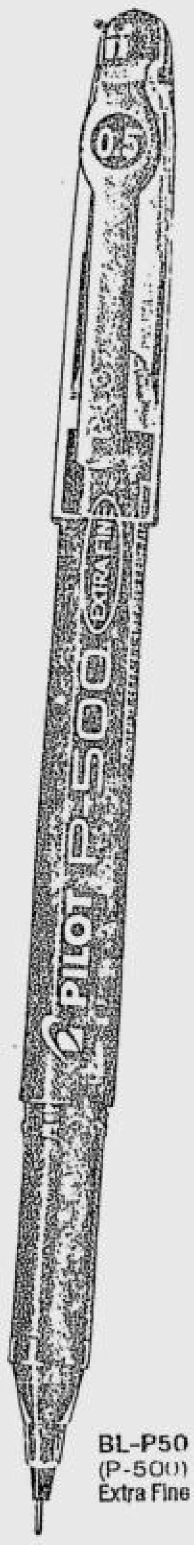

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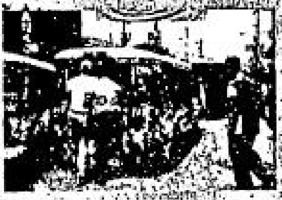

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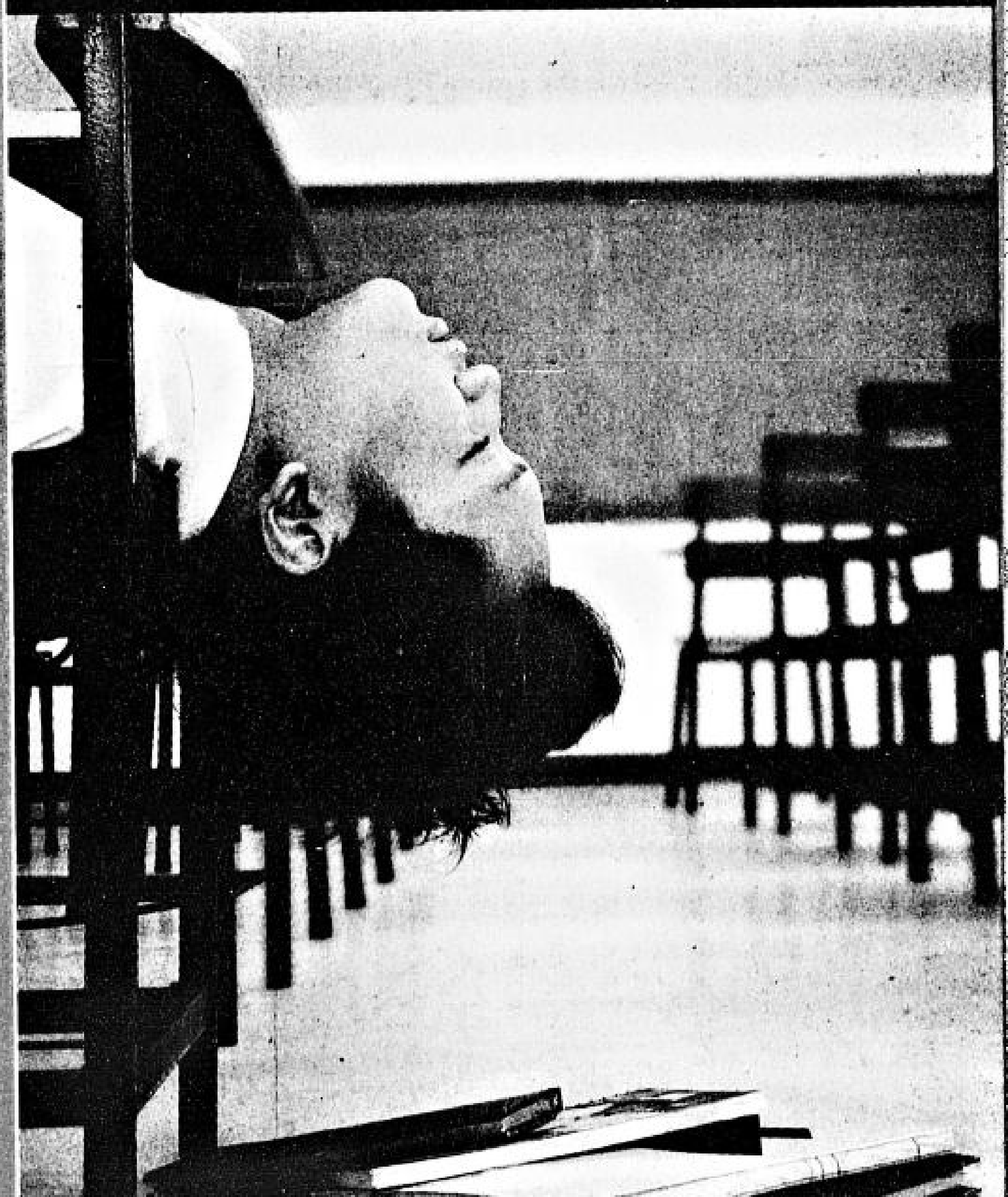

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S. Korea court to proceed with Roh impeach case

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REUTERS

SEOUL—South Korea's Constitutional Court said on Saturday it would not be swayed by results of this week's landmark elections, in which voters rejected impeachment of their president and ended conservative control of parliament.

"We are proceeding ahead with the case," Yang Chul-soo, a senior spokesperson at the Constitutional Court said by telephone.

"The election isn't in our consideration for the case." The pro-government Uri Party captured a majority of the vote on a groundswell of support for the president, tripling its seats at the expense of the parties that sent him into a political limbo last month for violating a minor election law.

The nine-member Constitutional Court had 180 days to rule on parliament's March 12 impeachment of Roh for a technical violation of the electoral law, during which time Prime Minister Goh Kun is serving as acting president.

Asked whether the court would end the impeachment case if the parliament overturns its earlier vote, Yang said: "We can't make comments based on such an assumption. But we will have to discuss it, if the parliament takes proper legitimate procedures and the vote is withdrawn."

Uri Party leader Chung Dong-young has proposed meeting with Park Keun-hye, chair of the opposition Grand National Party to discuss issues, including the reversal in impeachment vote.

But chances for scrapping the decision appeared slim as the head of the opposition Grand National Party has said she would await and respect the court's decision.

YTN television said the court would summon the president's former aides for questioning early next week, while holding a fourth round of conference on the matter of Roh's attendance on Thursday.

It also said the Korean Lawyers Association had presented a letter of opinion urging for the court to turn down the impeachment vote in a speedy manner.

Court officials were not immediately available for comment.

Hundreds of Roh's supporters gathered in Seoul's city center on Saturday evening to hold a peaceful candlelight rally against the impeachment.

The protesters, surrounded by policemen, chanted "Drop the impeachment," while a smaller group shouted "Roh Moo-hyun resign" in the same part of Seoul.

Thursday's election marked the first time a left-leaning or liberal party had won control of a hitherto conservative chamber, and meant the pro-Roh Uri Party could push through reformist legislation long stalled by opponents. "Uri" means "our" in Korean. The party's full Korean name means "Our Open Party."

Newspapers described the election outcome as a generation shift from those who dragged the country from the ruins of the 1950-53 Korean War to those who grew up as South Korea secured its place as Asia's fourth-largest economy.

The Uri Party's chief said in an interview with the local Yonhap news agency on Saturday that Roh's reinstatement would be of great help in reviving a weak domestic economy.

"The most effective medicine to the local economy is to reinstate the president as soon as possible so as to help ease uncertainties," Chung said.

The Uri Party has said measures to boost the economy and enhance corporate transparency are priorities when the National Assembly convenes in June. Legislation on labor reform is also pending. Chung said tax breaks were planned. *Reuters*

Time lists its most influential people

NEW YORK—TIME Magazine on Sunday published its list of the 100 "World's Most Influential People," including President George W. Bush, which it called "a radical gambler." Saying the Republican president will be judged by the Iraq war, columnist Andrew Sullivan wrote: "We do know that this unassuming man became a radical gambler with his fate and with humanity's."

Democratic challenger John Kerry, who also made the list, was called "a solemn unifier for the Democrats" by Joe Klein, who wrote a best-seller about the Clintons.

Both ex-President Bill Clinton and Sen. Hillary Clinton made the grade as "the brightest stars in the Democratic gallery." Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and his ally, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, were also listed.

Richard Clarke, the former head of US counterterrorism, said of Bin Laden: "In death he will become a martyr and further inspiration to radical Islamists—until someone offers an effective ideological or religious counterweight."

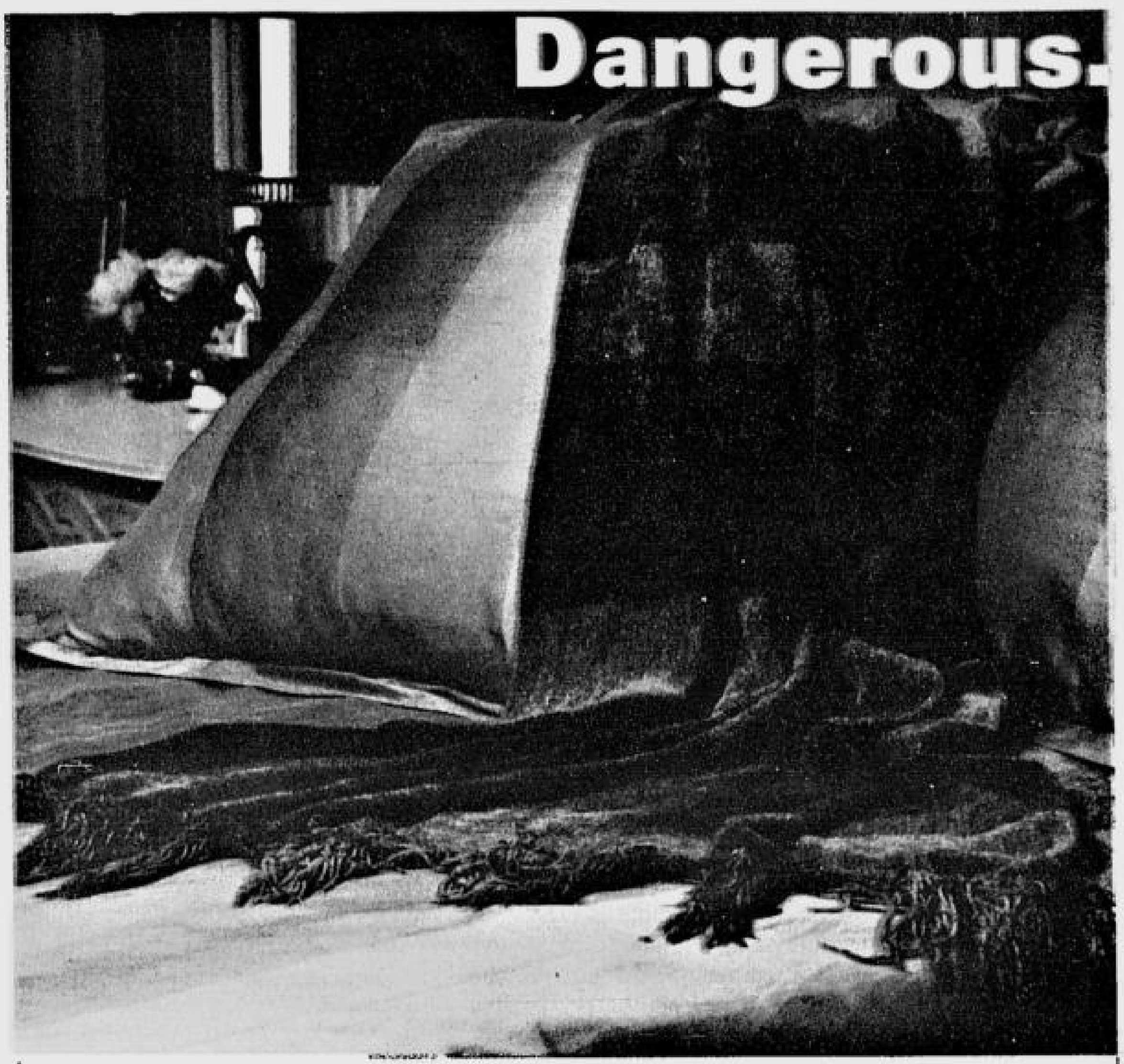
TIME listed Clarke's ex-boss, Condoleeza Rice, saying: "She can have her pick of Cabinet posts in a second Bush term"—especially if the Secretary of State or Defense were to leave.

Neither of those top officials were listed.

The commander of US forces in Iraq, Gen. John Abizaid, was included, along with cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and the founders of ground-breaking Arab TV station al-Jazeera. *Reuters*

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (ELECTORAL LAW)—Election contest—"Election contests involve public interest, and technicalities and procedural barriers should not be allowed to stand if they constitute an obstacle to the determination of the true will of the electorate in the choice of their elective officials. Laws governing election contests must be liberally construed to the end that the will of the people in the choice of public officials may not be defeated by mere technical objections. In an election case, the court has an imperative duty to ascertain by all means within its command who is the real candidate elected by the electorate. The Supreme Court frowns upon any interpretation of the law or the rules that would hinder in any way not only the free and intelligent casting of the votes in an election but also the correct ascertainment of the results." No doubt, allowing the election protest to proceed would be the best way of removing any doubt as to who was the real candidate chosen by the electorate. Barring the proceedings due to technicalities and procedures accomplishes nothing except possibly to suppress the will of the majority. [Carlos v. Angeles, 346 SCRA 571 [2000])] [En Banc, Justice Azcuna, Saquilayan vs Commission on Elections, [G.R. No. 157249. November 28, 2003] BY R. B. VERA



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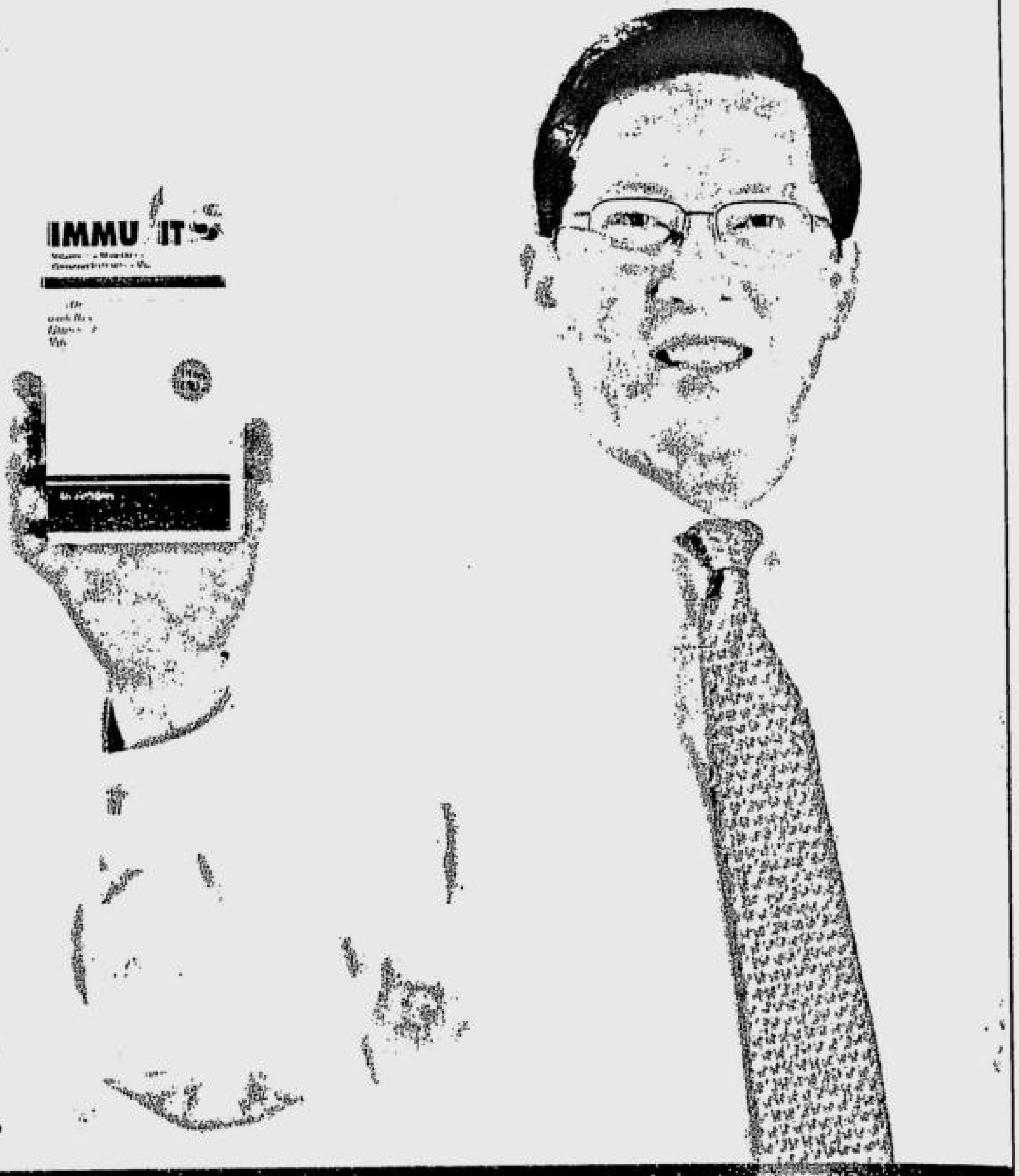

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S. Korea court to proceed with Roh impeach case

ROH
REUTERS

SEOUL—South Korea's Constitutional Court said on Saturday it would not be swayed by results of this week's landmark elections, in which voters rejected impeachment of their president and ended conservative control of parliament.

"We are proceeding ahead with the case," Yang Chul-soo, a senior spokesperson at the Constitutional Court said by telephone.

"The election isn't in our consideration for the case." The pro-government Uri Party captured a majority of the vote on a groundswell of support for the president, tripling its seats at the expense of the parties that sent him into a political limbo last month for violating a minor election law.

The nine-member Constitutional Court had 180 days to rule on parliament's March 12 impeachment of Roh for a technical violation of the electoral law, during which time Prime Minister Goh Kun is serving as acting president.

Asked whether the court would end the impeachment case if the parliament overturns its earlier vote, Yang said: "We can't make comments based on such an assumption. But we will have to discuss it, if the parliament takes proper legitimate procedures and the vote is withdrawn."

Uri Party leader Chung Dong-young has proposed meeting with Park Keun-hye, chair of the opposition Grand National Party to discuss issues, including the reversal in impeachment vote.

But chances for scrapping the decision appeared slim as the head of the opposition Grand National Party has said she would await and respect the court's decision.

YTN television said the court would summon the president's former aides for questioning early next week, while holding a fourth round of conference on the matter of Roh's attendance on Thursday.

It also said the Korean Lawyers Association had presented a letter of opinion urging for the court to turn down the impeachment vote in a speedy manner.

Court officials were not immediately available for comment.

Hundreds of Roh's supporters gathered in Seoul's city center on Saturday evening to hold a peaceful candlelight rally against the impeachment.

The protesters, surrounded by policemen, chanted "Drop the impeachment," while a smaller group shouted "Roh Moo-hyun resign" in the same part of Seoul.

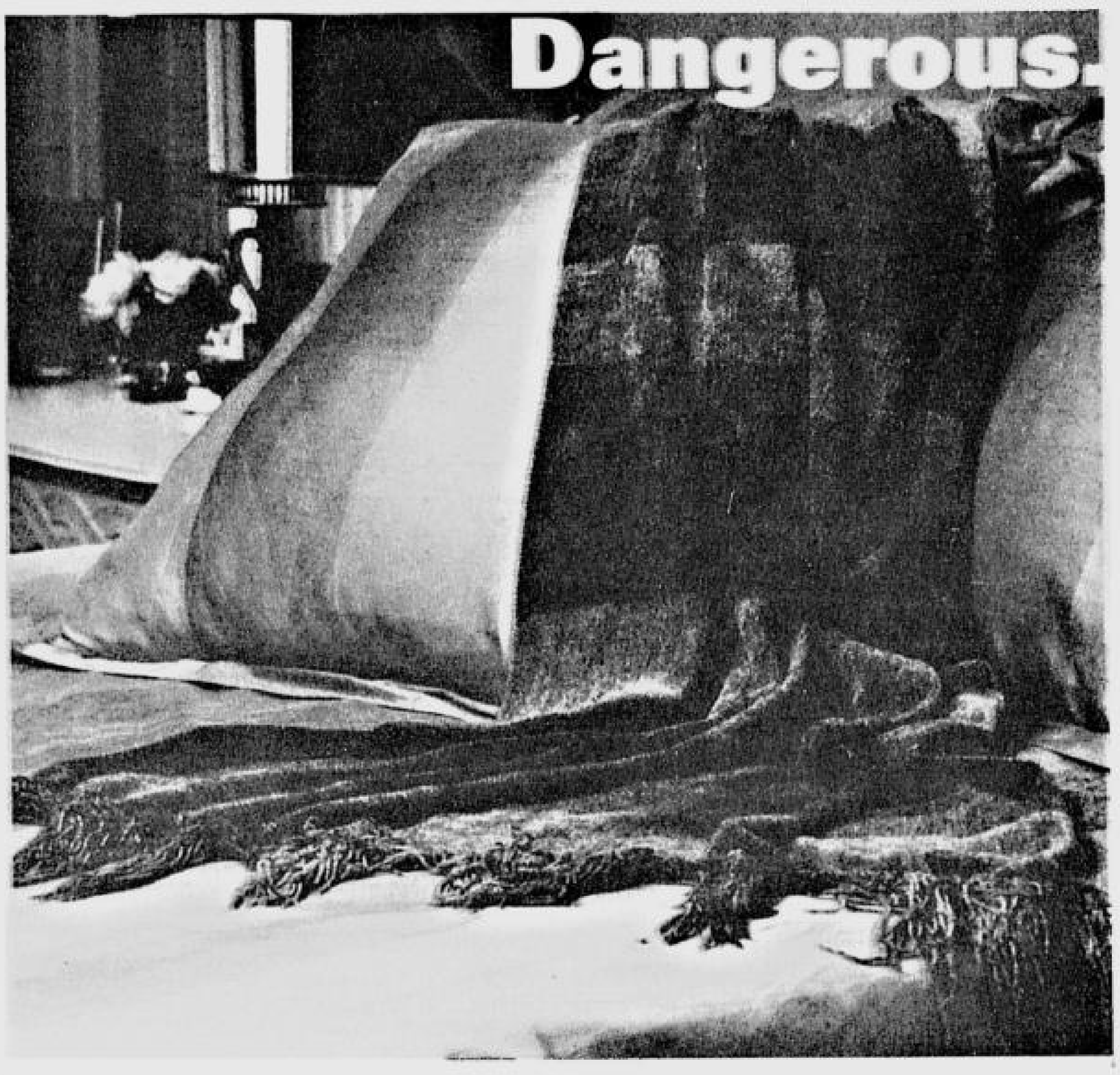
Thursday's election marked the first time a left-leaning or liberal party had won control of a hitherto conservative chamber, and meant the pro-Roh Uri Party could push through reformist legislation long stalled by opponents. "Uri" means "our" in Korean. The party's full Korean name means "Our Open Party."

Newspapers described the election outcome as a generation shift from those who dragged the country from the ruins of the 1950-53 Korean War to those who grew up as South Korea secured its place as Asia's fourth-largest economy.

The Uri Party's chief said in an interview with the local Yonhap news agency on Saturday that Roh's reinstatement would be of great help in reviving a weak domestic economy.

"The most effective medicine to the local economy is to reinstate the president as soon as possible so as to help ease uncertainties," Chung said.

The Uri Party has said measures to boost the economy and enhance corporate transparency are priorities when the National Assembly convenes in June. Legislation on labor reform is also pending. Chung said tax breaks were planned. *Reuters*



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Time lists its most influential people

NEW YORK—TIME Magazine on Sunday published its list of the 100 "World's Most Influential People," including President George W. Bush, which it called "a radical gambler." Saying the Republican president will be judged by the Iraq war, columnist Andrew Sullivan wrote: "We do know that this unassuming man became a radical gambler with his fate and with humanity's."

Democratic challenger John Kerry, who also made the list, was called "a solemn unifier for the Democrats" by Joe Klein, who wrote a best-seller about the Clintons.

Both ex-President Bill Clinton and Sen. Hillary Clinton made the grade as "the brightest stars in the Democratic gallery." Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and his ally, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, were also listed.

Richard Clarke, the former head of US counterterrorism, said of Bin Laden: "In death he will become a martyr and further inspiration to radical Islamists—until someone offers an effective ideological or religious counterweight."

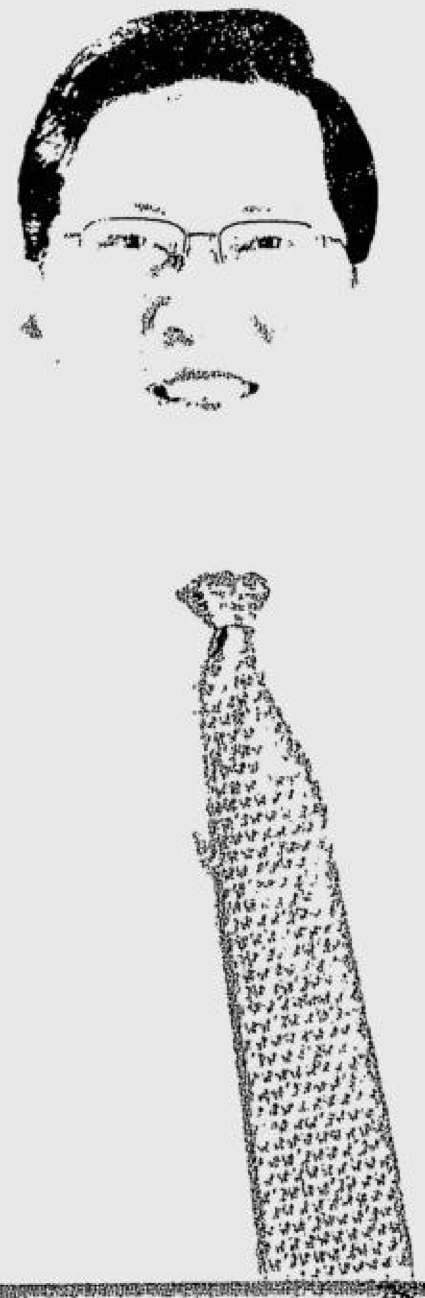
TIME listed Clarke's ex-boss, Condoleeza Rice, saying: "She can have her pick of Cabinet posts in a second Bush term"—especially if the Secretary of State or Defense were to leave.

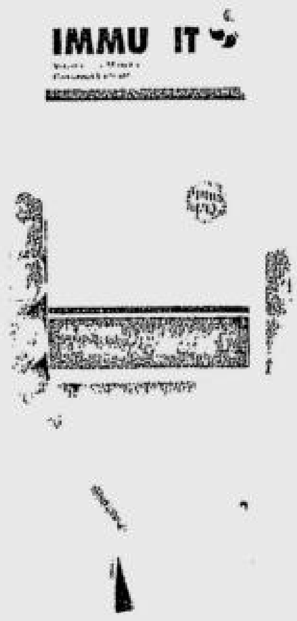
Neither of those top officials were listed.

The commander of US forces in Iraq, Gen. John Abizaid, was included, along with cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and the founders of ground-breaking Arab TV station al-Jazeera. *Reuters*

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (ELECTORAL LAW)—Election contest—"Election contests involve public interest, and technicalities and procedural barriers should not be allowed to stand if they constitute an obstacle to the determination of the true will of the electorate in the choice of their elective officials. Laws governing election contests must be liberally construed to the end that the will of the people in the choice of public officials may not be defeated by mere technical objections. In an election case, the court has an imperative duty to ascertain by all means within its command who is the real candidate elected by the electorate. The Supreme Court frowns upon any interpretation of the law or the rules that would hinder in any way not only the free and intelligent casting of the votes in an election but also the correct ascertainment of the results." No doubt, allowing the election protest to proceed would be the best way of removing any doubt as to who was the real candidate chosen by the electorate. Barring the proceedings due to technicalities and procedures accomplishes nothing except possibly to suppress the will of the majority. [Carlos v. Angeles, 346 SCRA 571 [2000]] [En Banc, Justice Azcuna, Saquilayan vs Commission on Elections, [G.R. No. 157249. November 28, 2003] BY R. B. VERA





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OPINION

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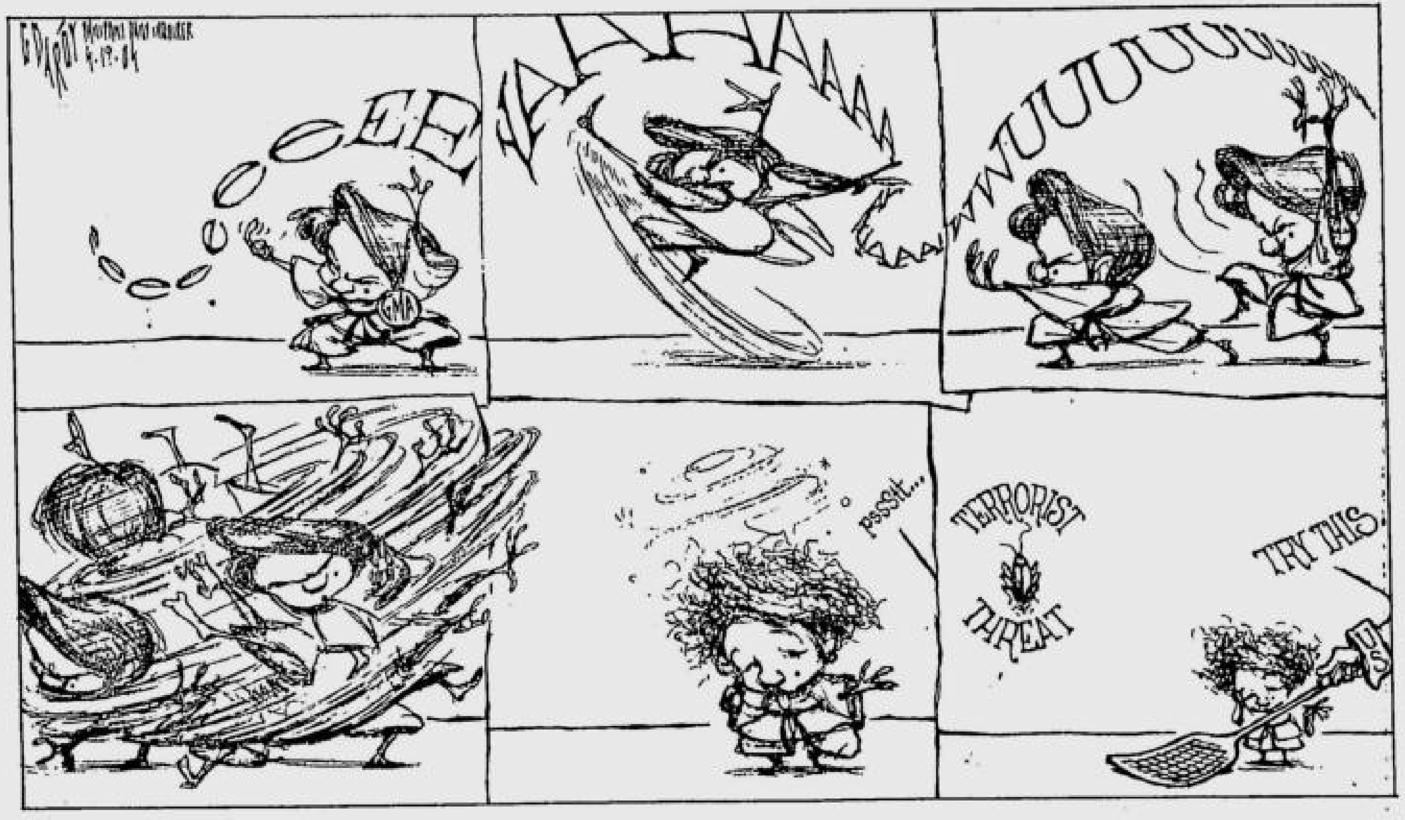

Poe on power crisis

EDITORIAL

IF Fernando Poe Jr. ever decides to come out of his no-talk, no-mistake shell, he can debate the issue of the looming power crisis with President Macapagal-Arroyo. He can score a lot of political points, especially in pro-Macapagal areas in the Visayas; he can even put the President on the defensive, especially on her alleged closeness to the Lopez business group; above all, he can demonstrate that, indeed, his will be a healing, unifying presidency.

For despite Energy Secretary Vince Perez's soothing statement that concerned parties in the power sector had decided to "work together," concern about high energy prices now and inadequate power supply in the near future remains.

Federico Lopez, president of First Generation Holdings Corp., had earlier called for a "level-headed dialogue and coordination among players, regulators and government," because (among other considerations) "mistrust is high." Perhaps the mistrust level has gone down a bit, after Lopez (a member of the powerful family that owns ABS-CBN and controls Manila Electric Co.) and Perez met at the Department of Energy head office earlier this month.

But the issues which Lopez raised in a series of high-profile presentations and interviews in March and early April continue to be valid. We already know what the President's position on these issues is; it is time we hear from Poe himself.

A few decades ago, rice was the primary political commodity; it could make or unmake a presidency. Today, power has possibly assumed that critical role. Fidel Ramos won the presidency in 1992 with the smallest plurality in history; but on his hundredth day in office, a survey found that about half of voting-age Filipinos "remembered" having voted for him. In large part, this new mandate was a direct result of Ramos' decisive handling of the power crisis then. Today, as a consequence of Ramos' necessarily expensive power measures, public dissatisfaction over the PPA charge threatens President Macapagal-Arroyo's election chances. (It also partly explains the high ratings of Juan Ponce Enrile, who has made the PPA a personal issue.)

The question is: What does Poe think?

FirstGen's Lopez has sounded the alarm about a power shortage in the making; Perez has attacked the alarmist speculations. Perhaps it is too early to use the crisis word, but the power sector is definitely beset with serious problems. Brownouts are back in parts of the Visayas and Mindanao. Industrial power rates in the country remain the second most expensive in Asia, next only to those of Japan. The continuing PPA charges remain massively unpopular, but the imposition of a ceiling (a maximum) on the charges continues to trouble power firms.

Above all, there is the matter of what Lopez calls the "highly politicized" regulatory environment.

Their experience with the regulatory rollercoaster in the water sector has given the Lopez business group a permanent trauma. As former Maynilad Water president Rafael Alunan emphasized in his exclusive interview with InqTV, "populist" policies are the principal enemy of any privatization program. If the government "is not ready to give up its policy of subsidies, then it shouldn't privatize," Alunan said.

In his presentations and interviews, FirstGen's Lopez struck exactly the same note. He lamented that "the government had given in to the populist tide," noting that the reduction in the PPA has wreaked havoc on the power companies' bottom line. There is also the matter of cross-subsidies, which won't be removed until next year.

Thus, the dilemma: Subsidized rates for consumers are a popular policy. But power rates made artificially higher because of the consumer subsidies make energy firms less viable, and weaken the case for new and necessary investments in the power sector. How much personal goodwill to use in asking people to make tough sacrifices, how much political will to use in standing up to big business—these are for the chief executive to think over. How much give, how much take, where to strike the balance—these are eminently for the chief executive to decide.

But what does Poe think?

Massive leaks in MWSS aqueduct

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE GOVERNMENT has been repeatedly warning of a water shortage this summer and has been appealing to the public to conserve water—or face possible rationing. At the same time, President Macapagal-Arroyo, always courting votes, has been boasting in her campaign speeches about her "Patubig ni PGMA" in which the government is expanding water connections to communities without them.

Last April 16, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System again came out with a full-page advertisement calling for water conservation and enumerating the measures it has taken to increase the water supply of Metro Manila—no doubt to spare itself of public opprobrium in case of a water shortage and rationing. Among these measures is the directive for its two water concessionaires, Maynilad and Manila Water, to fix the leaks in their respective zones. Water lost through leaks and illegal connections goes as high as 70 percent of the water they supply. In other words, more than two-thirds of the water supplied by the MWSS and its concessionaires is lost.

That is only the tip of the iceberg. The MWSS ad is not entirely true. The MWSS is not telling the whole truth. It is losing more water than it cares to admit publicly. This has been going on for many years already. Ms Macapagal knows about this because a meeting was held in Malacañang two years ago to remedy the problem, but she has not done anything about it until now. Yet she keeps boasting of providing water for waterless communities. How can you provide more water when the supply is not enough?

This is how the MWSS is losing excessive and unacceptable amounts of water: raw water flows from the Ipo and Angat dams through five huge aqueducts to the La Mesa and Novaliches reservoirs and the Balara filtration plant. Aqueduct No. 5 has been leaking huge amounts of water for many years now because of faulty construction. (The aqueducts were built by different contractors.) More than half of the water flowing through it, 14 million liters daily, is lost through these leaks. The leaks grow bigger every year. That is why the water levels in the Angat and Ipo reservoirs have been decreasing rapidly. It is due not just to consumption and evaporation. The bigger reason is the leaks.

Not only that, the leaks are weakening the foundation of the aqueduct for which reason it could give way any time soon. When that happens, one-fifth of the water supply of Metro Manila will be lost. Worse, when aqueduct No. 5 gives way, the terrific amount of water gushing out will erode the foundations of the adjoining four other aqueducts which will break down, too, as a result. Thus, Metro Manila will be as dry as a desert.

Several attempts were made to fix the leaks but these not only failed to stop the leaks but, worse, increased them.

In that Malacañang meeting held two years ago, the MWSS and outside experts and contractors recommended to build a bypass around the leaking portion and re-channel the spilt water through this new aqueduct, much like attaching a new artery to bypass a blocked coronary artery in an open heart surgery. The cost: P1.2 billion.

Nothing has been done since then. Probably the MWSS didn't have the money. Probably it was forgotten. After all, nobody can immediately see the leaks on the surface. And if nobody speaks about it, the public will not know any better. Probably, the present administration wants to pass on the problem to the next administration that will take over, the way it is passing on the water problems of Metro Manila to the two private concessionaires. That is why the MWSS concession was privatized in the first place. But the problem about the aqueducts is the responsibility of the MWSS, not the concessionaires. Certainly, top MWSS officials are not being candid about the problem and would rather forget about it.

As for the President, did she forget about it, too? Did she think the MWSS has already solved the problem? Are the MWSS officials being honest with her? Or does she know about it but would rather pretend not to because she would rather spend the P1.2 billion for her reelection campaign? After all, using that money to hire street sweepers wearing T-shirts with her name emblazoned on them, and for giant billboards with her name and picture also on them, would earn more votes than an expensive project that few people will notice and appreciate.

Meanwhile, the massive leaks continue, the erosion of the aqueducts' foundations continue, the water levels of the reservoirs continue to drop and Metro Manilans face a long, hot and thirsty summer. Worse, if the foundations give way, Metro Manila can become another Sahara desert.

But does that concern our President at all? I don't think so. All her attention, energy and government resources are focused on first winning reelection. But do all that ambition and cunning—and negligence—make her deserve another six years as President?

* * *

TODAY'S JOKES:

Aide to President Macapagal-Arroyo: *"Ma'am, nag-withdraw na si Roco."*

GMA: *"Talaga? Sa account ko o sa account ni Mike?"*

* * *

Russian: "We're first in space."
American: "We're first to the moon."
FPJ: "We will be first to the sun."
American: "You can't go there. You'll burn."
FPJ: "We're not stupid. We'll go there at night."

Sick

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I TAKE back what I said about the chances of Raul Roco's campaign being suddenly revived rather than dealt the final blow by what's happened to him as being on the off side. It's become quite more than an off-chance, it's become a real chance. These last few days, I've been hearing jokes about how the other candidates are kicking around ideas on how to win the same kind of sympathy, some even contemplating miraculously surviving an ambush. Those may not be entirely jokes. I do recall that Juan Ponce Enrile did just that—staged an ambush on himself—to help Ferdinand Marcos justify martial law more than three decades ago. But that's another story.

But for the first time since his campaign started, Roco has been getting front page and prime time news coverage. The only time that happened previously was way back in end-November when he launched the Alliance of Hope. And the reports were perfunctory. This past week, he has been consistently the main news, hogging headlines, or at least being one of the main stories. And wonder of wonders, the reports on him have gotten warmer and more sympathetic, something that never happened when he was spouting economic and political cures for the country. Suddenly, he's become good copy, a human interest story reporters love to write about.

I know that because the networks and foreign correspondents have been calling repeatedly these past days. Sorry, but I leave the TV appearances to my daughter, I have better uses for my free time, emphasis on free. And in any case, I know only as much about Roco's condition as the other fellow. Jimmy Tan is the person to ask. He's not just Roco's second in command, he's a doctor, and he's honest—a quality rarely found in the country today, least of all among the candidates or their aides. As soon as he gets word from the doctors, Jimmy says, he'll make it known. Not a second sooner, that would just be speculation.

But it's a monumental reversal of fortune—to the good, as the Roco campaign goes. When the picture of Roco in the hammock appeared on our front page last Wednesday, the first thought that came to mind was that Roco's affliction was the potent brew that either killed the patient or yanked him out of the grave. It was just one or the other.

Well, it hasn't killed him. And as Nietzsche says, what doesn't kill you will make you stronger. The situation piles up irony upon irony though. It took a personal physical sickness to give Roco's campaign a new lease on life, and it took absence to make him present. Or it took invisibility to make him visible. The last is particularly rich. While he was stomping the country and being there for all to see—in more ways than one, he had a prosperous Santa Claus girth, unfortunately without the latter's jolliness—few could see him. Now that he's physically gone, everyone can see him. It's not just media that have been calling, friends have. What has happened to Roco? What is he sick with? When will he be back? Or will he? The curiosity is boundless. He hasn't had it so good. He can always quote Mark Twain from his sickbed and say, the news of his—or his campaign's—death is grossly exaggerated.

I did talk to one of his supporters who reported that he was in high spirits. He apparently quipped a la Mark Twain that he was sure he'd pass his medical exam because as with the bar exam he prepared well for it.

But what, as some friends ask, if he was sicker than his camp has made him out to be? What if his backache is really a grave and imponderable affliction?

Well, what of it? I voted for Jovito Salonga in 1992 notwithstanding that his detractors were trying to convince me a man in his late 70s was a liability to the country. I thought that was an idiotic argument. Salonga was right: It's not how old you are, it's what you have to show for it. Some people in their 70s possess wisdom and idealism, some people in their 20s show only folly and greed. Salonga had wisdom and idealism. I would pick him anytime over someone who was younger and showed a talent only for thinking of Numero Uno.

The same choice presents itself to me now. And my response is exactly the same. I would rather choose a sick man who is very likely to make the country healthy than a healthy woman or man who is likely to make, or has already made, the country sick. I would choose Raul Roco even if he had only six more years to live over GMA even if she has forever to live. I would see the first as a blessing and the second as a curse. I would see the first as a promise and the second as a threat. I would rather choose someone who has turned the education department from one of the sickest offices in this country into its healthiest—by the World Bank's reckoning—rather than someone who has turned this country from one of the sickest countries in Southeast Asia into its sickest, by any standard. I would rather choose someone who will weigh the costs of war even while wracked with pain than someone who will embrace war willy-nilly while seized only with ambition.

Roco's battle with his affliction is not unlike the country's battle with its disease. I do not know what the doctor has ordered for him, but I do know he is what the doctor has ordered for us. He is easily the best candidate for president. He is easily the best person to resuscitate a country ravaged by the cancer of greed, cynicism and despair. I cannot imagine not voting for him simply because he happens to be laboring from some disease: His disease at least afflicts only his body, not his mind, or heart. Certainly, I cannot imagine voting for someone simply because she or he happens to be up and about: The wasting of the soul is always worse than the wasting of the body.

Vote for someone like that? That is—sick.

Unity formula

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE FOCUS of political observers today will be on what may transpire in Tanay on the birthday celebration of former President Estrada, where opposition candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Panfilo Lacson are expected to show up in what may be a last-ditch effort to unite the opposition. Estrada earlier made an emotional appeal to the two candidates to unite in order to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo, and he is expected to heighten this appeal today, with the help of powerful pressure blocs, such as the Iglesia ni Cristo.

* * *

Several unity formulae are reportedly being forged. One is for Lacson to run for vice president under FPJ, with Loren Legarda sliding down to the KNP senatorial lineup on the promise that in an FPJ administration, she will become the Senate president. This is thought to be a strong combination: FPJ's popularity and Lacson's money and organization (run by the Zamora brothers and Lito Banayo, all veteran political strategists, against whom the ASO team of Senators Ed Angara, Tito Sotto and Tessie Oreta is no match whatsoever, it seems). But FPJ himself has shot down this formula and vows he wouldn't cast Legarda aside. The big stumbling block seems to be Angara, Loren's patron, who has been so insulted these past days by Lacson that it's difficult to see him agreeing to this solution.

* * *

Another unity formula being eyed is that Lacson would bow out of the race altogether, in exchange for getting a number of Cabinet posts in the FPJ administration, notably the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Justice, which will be "his kingdom," as an analyst put it. Frankly, however, this may not be an easy formula. Lacson has been quite smug about his superior organization and seemingly bottomless pocket of campaign funds, that it's hard to see him bowing out of the picture altogether. Moreover, reports say, his Chinese funders are not agreeable to backing FPJ—in other words, their money is non-transferable. Then too, some analysts are already seeing the "disintegration" of the FPJ machinery, so that it's hard to see why Lacson would give way to him.

By the way, the media reports about Susan Roces boxing an Iloilo city councilor on the stomach has to be the incredible additional nail on the FPJ campaign coffin. That boxing episode shatters somewhat the movie image of Roces as a sweet little woman altogether. Coming after the Sandra Aguinaldo episode (is Region 6 the Poe couple's Waterloo?), FPJ's campaign needed it like a hole in the head.

* * *

Unity, however, is a ticking clock, and the problem for the two opposition factions is that even assuming their two top leaders can unite either as running mates or with Lacson in mere supporting cast, shifting people and logistics support is not that easy to work out. What happens to their respective candidates at the local level and their ground troops? How do the two factions integrate those elements and make them work together harmoniously? At this stage, groups from each faction are said to be deserting to one or the other or to GMA's side. Moreover, if Lacson is going to fund FPJ's campaign, how much say would he insist on? It's easy to see Sotto battling Banayo, etc. But if they don't unite by this week, it's all over for the opposition.

* * *

Reports say Raul Roco's prostate cancer may have aggravated, and he would formally be bowing out of the race to seek extended treatment in the US. Since his illness, some pundits as well as pollsters have opined that his votes would benefit principally GMA. This was borne out by two mock elections conducted by Bantay Katarungan, headed by Sen. Jovito Salonga and Sedfrey Ordoñez, among its law student volunteers from seven leading law schools: the UP, Ateneo, San Beda, Lyceum, FEU, University of the East and UST. The first mock election was held about a month ago and the results were: zero for both GMA and FPJ, the majority going for Roco. The other day, however, another mock election was held on the premise that Roco was already out. The results were markedly different: still zero for FPJ, but now 17 for GMA; other votes were: 7 for Lacson, 6 for Bro. Eddie Villanueva while 5 still remained steadfastly for Roco. The dramatic leap for GMA was caused partly by the shift of Roco followers, expectedly among the youth, to her.

* * *

Snipped off for lack of space was a crucial line to last Saturday's column item where Biliran re-electionist Rep. Gerry Espina recalled what he told Raul Roco and 40 other former Constitutional Convention delegates in a get-together at Emil Ong's place last October, organized by friends of Roco. Espina related that he advised Roco to "seek signs from above." He then recalled how Manila Mayor Arsenio Lacson had refused the offer of then Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay to run as his running mate in the 1953 presidential elections because he felt that Magsaysay looked so healthy so that his vice president would have to wait so long. But as fate would have it, RM was killed in a plane crash in 1957 and Vice President Carlos P. Garcia became president, while Lacson died as mayor.

* * *

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Nonsense and insensibility

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

HOW'S it over there? I texted my daughter, a student of UP Diliman. We were exchanging views about the campaign. "We're afraid of both Poe and Gloria. More afraid of Lacson. Roco or Brother Eddie *sana*, but surveys show they won't win. So lesser evil *na lang* of the top two," she texted back.

I was stunned. For the first time in her life she's going to exercise a most important role of her being a citizen of this country, and she's going to vote for "the lesser evil"? Is this what we have fallen into, a pit so despicable, so debilitating that we are left only with the choice of the potentially least dangerous?

I could only weep in tearless grief, made more painful by a blast from the past—our own youth, when we were free to exercise the privilege of inspired choices: statesmanship, brilliance, principles, the possibility of leading the nation forward!

How many more among her own generation would be this cynical? I could only hope, fervently, that there would be enough like her younger sister—coming of age just in time for these elections—who vows to vote for Raul Roco "no matter what."

What was I to do? I had brought them up to think independently. **"Don't be seduced by surveys!"** was the next message I frantically sent.

"Why?" was her only word of reply. I expected that and I was up to it, having had to deal, like most mothers, with the "why" question almost from the day she and her siblings could talk.

How was I to explain that caveat in truncated 160-character takes from my pathetically outmoded mobile phone? The cartoon light bulb suddenly flashed above my head: "check out my next column," I thumbed in.

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So did those boys, in their early 20s, who told me that damn the surveys, they were for Brother Eddie. "You mean there are people in Jolo who will vote for Brother Eddie?" I asked much surprised because I had not seen a single poster of his in town.

"Of course," they said. "We don't want Gloria!"

Just like Bibeth Orteza who unequivocally said on "Debate," "Anybody but Gloria!"

A known supporter of Fernando Poe Jr., her reasons for rejecting the one generally considered "the lesser evil" could be the same as those of the two rooting for Brother Eddie. Which simply means that people of divergent political persuasions get to be united by a common motivation—to junk the one person that they think should not be president of this country.

To believe in these surveys, to be swayed by political analysts who have imposed on us the idea that we are left with only two choices because they top the surveys—and subliminally, to go for the "lesser evil"—is to fall victim to seduction of the most oppressive kind; to submit to herd mentality of the most mindless kind.

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Oh yes, Ma'am. In Martha Stewart's country that was very, very much against the law.

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Nonetheless, there are at least three provisions that may be cited in the one list of laws that all countries adhere to, that were violated in that single caper. Ask Brother Eddie, he knows them by heart.

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Political cliffhanger

THE LONG VIEW

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THE NATION awaits the results of yet another unification meeting between Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson. What is at stake is the political survival of the opposition. Can it manage to get its act together this late in the game? Or will it continue down the path of self-destruction?

Unlike previous meetings, Poe now brings to the table a disintegrating candidacy while Lacson offers the advantages of an organization that has remained small, but cohesive and well-funded. Poe remains popular enough to offer a large swing vote. Lacson, on the other hand, offers an antidote to the fear factor being utilized so well by the administration: clearly, Lacson cannot be accused of ignorance of the issues, or of an unwillingness (or inability) to speak out forcefully, or of administrative or even political inexperience.

Taking a clinical look at the campaign, it seems obvious what the opposition needs to do. For its survival, the opposition needs to unite behind Lacson, with Poe making a grand gesture of abandoning his candidacy for the good of the opposition and "the country." In this way, Poe saves face by not risking defeat, and by leaving the campaign at a time when throwing his support behind a fellow member of the opposition can really shake up the political landscape.

The opposition is direly in need of a realignment. The question is, what kind of realignment serves the chances of the opposition best? Whose followers would be more likely to loyally follow the direction of their leader? It seems more that followers of Poe would loyally shift their votes to Lacson if told to do so by their idol, than Lacson's followers throwing their support to Poe. Poe's dropping out of the race would result in a stampede of supporters to Lacson, instead of Poe picking up crumbs of support from Lacson were the latter to slide down or back out in support of Poe.

In a sense, this offers greater prospects to the opposition than Raul Roco's disintegrating campaign does to the administration. For the administration, pocketing a few crumbs of support could potentially be a decisive advantage in the present close race between the President and Poe; but in terms of numbers, the Roco supporters who do decide to defect will overwhelmingly choose other fringe candidates—Lacson, or Eddie Villanueva—or still vote for Roco or boycott the elections, rather than vote for the President. Which candidates do a particular candidate's supporters dislike more? Chances are, Poe's followers dislike Lacson less than Lacson's followers dislike Poe, just as Roco's followers dislike Villanueva and Lacson less than they dislike the President.

Finally, there is the question of machinery and money. Who in the opposition is in a position to do more with what both camps have? Arguably, Lacson has more money and a more disciplined campaign. Poe has the numbers but has been saddled with a campaign machinery that is undisciplined and saddled with too many faces that are not much better, and often far worse, than what the administration offers. The Lacson campaign has much more that sets it apart from the administration than does Poe's campaign. Since the Chinese community is really the only community that generously donates money to campaigns during elections, which opposition camp, then, has a greater chance of using money to the best advantage in the crucial days leading up to the polls, and in the even more crucial counting to follow? Obviously, the Lacson camp. In the first place, Lacson would be trusted by generous Chinese donors to actually use the money for the campaign instead of pocketing it; and as a military man, he most likely would have a better chance at using the money for strategic advantage than the traditional political types surrounding Poe.

The big problem with this scenario, however, is that too many personalities in the Poe camp stand to lose face, position and privilege should Lacson become the standard-bearer of the opposition. Chief among the losers will be former President Estrada, who has kept Lacson at arms' length and invested his remaining personal and political prestige in Poe. After June 30, the fiction that Joseph Estrada remains the de jure president of the Philippines will become academic. As will the opposition argument that at present we have an illegitimate, extra-constitutional government. The May 10 elections will result in a return to the status quo ante Edsa II: which means the Estradas and Tatads of this world will be deprived of any pretensions to a moral cause, something Miriam Defensor-Santiago recognized early enough; Senators Ed Angara and Tito Sotto, who are already being blamed for the mess the Poe campaign is in; and soon-to-be former Sen. Tessie Oreta, who can be blamed for the fall of Estrada and who prudently refrained from running rather than suffer defeat. They will be out in the cold or, even if included in the enlarged Lacson tent, be reduced to a minor, supporting role.

In the end, the opposition is faced with the question of whether to put band aids on a severely wounded Poe campaign, or massively invigorate the Lacson campaign, thus confounding all the carefully built plans of the administration. Napoleon counseled audacity in war; the same applies to politics. Poe has not been audacious; Lacson has shown greater grit. And in the face of the President's grit, which has put her ahead of the pack, the opposition should be able to see the writing on the wall—or the ballots.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Breaking news

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

SOME readers of the Inquirer have very high expectations about its editorial content. When they see something that, in their opinion, does not meet their reading standards, they do not hesitate to write, send an e-mail or call to complain.

Through these comments, the newspaper gets a feel of the readers' thoughts on how it lives up to (or deviates from) its commitment to "balanced news and fearless views."

A reader, Horace Infante, went beyond my perception of the newspaper's corps of loyal readers cum critics. He even noticed a change in the format of the front page of the Inquiper in one issue and sought clarification about that situation.

He wrote: "I don't know if I was just disoriented that I actually saw two different banner headlines for the same Inquirer issue last March 26, 2004. While in Quezon City, I saw the Lopezes' name in bold letters on the front page when I perused a copy of the newspaper at the sidewalk.

"I cannot quite recall the exact words, but the headline had something to do with the much publicized Maynilad deal. However, when I got home and took hold of my regular Inquirer copy from my *suking* [favorite] newsstand, I saw a different headline from the one I read earlier in the Quezon City sidewalk. (I live in Manila, by the way.)

"It's unfortunate that I didn't buy the Quezon City copy to prove my point. Was I suffering from over fatigue that I got the headlines mixed up or was there a deliberate attempt to suppress the news? Can somebody enlighten me on this?"

Remat

The reader was not suffering from disorientation or over fatigue. Neither were the headlines mixed up nor was there an attempt on the part of the Inquirer to suppress the news.

Yes, there were two versions of the Inquirer's front page that day. The "one star" edition carried the banner "Info on Maynilad sought." The accompanying news was about the demand of presidential candidate Raul Roco and senatorial candidate Melanio "Batas" Mauricio Jr. for the court hearing the Maynilad case to make public the details of the government's plan to take over the financially troubled Maynilad Water Services from the Lopez family.

The "two star" edition bore the banner "Deal saves Lopezes P2B." This time, the report was about the contents of a document that the Inquirer obtained from a reliable source showing that if the plan pushes through, the Lopezes stand to save P2.4 billion on top of being relieved of the obligation to remit P8 billion in unpaid concession fees to the government.

Here's how the change in banners happened: At the time the "one star" edition was cleared for printing at around 8:30 p.m. of the previous day, the latest news in the hands of the editorial staff on the Maynilad case was Roco's and Mauricio's demand for the disclosure of the terms of the government takeover. It was this "one star" edition that the reader first saw in Quezon City.

Later in the night, the staff got hold of a copy of a document that indicated that the proposed arrangement would be financially advantageous to the Lopezes. Since the latter news was more significant than the earlier report on the Maynilad case, the staff ordered a "remat" (or change in the format and contents of the earlier front page) of the newspaper to reflect this latest development.

Update

Thus, the banner and story that appeared in the "one star" edition were removed and replaced with ones that reflected the breaking news about the recently discovered document. It was this version, or "two star" edition, that the reader got from his news dealer.

There is nothing sinister or questionable about that action. Newspapers routinely make "remats" on news reports when, after an edition had been cleared for publication, there are late-breaking developments that deserve to be immediately brought to the readers' attention.

No self-respecting newspaper will allow itself to be the bearer of old or obsolete news. It always wants to publish the latest in newsworthy events, if not to be the first to break the news to the public. The readers want to know what's going on now and what may happen in the future.

With radio and television able to give up-to-the-minute and even on-the-spot reporting, newspapers are obliged to be as current and fresh as much as humanly possible in order to keep their readership.

"Remats" cost money, lots of money. The materials used for the original edition have to be discarded and a new set procured to meet the printing requirements of the new edition. But that's how the cookie crumbles in the newspaper industry. The additional expenses are a small price that newspapers have to pay to live up to their mission and, at the same time, maintain the patronage of their readers.

Error

Going to another subject matter, last April 11, the Inquirer reported the daring Black Saturday escape from a jail in Basilan of 24 Abu Sayyaf members. With government troops on high alert during the Lenten season, the incident dealt a black eye to the country's anti-terrorist campaign.

A portion of the news read: "The mass escape was the third major breakout from a Philippine National Police jail the past two years. Pentagon kidnap leader Faisal Marahombsar slipped out from Camp Crame in June 2002, and Jemaah Islamiya leader Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi also from Camp Crame last year."

The description of the Basilan jail as belonging to the PNP drew a strong howl of protest from my friends in the PNP. They said it was inaccurate because the Basilan jail is under the control and supervision of the Basilan provincial government, not the PNP.

Additionally, except for a few municipal jails, the PNP has nothing to do with the administration of detention centers or prison houses in the country. The responsibility of managing the country's district, city and municipal jails has been assigned by law to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

The Inquirer apologizes for the error. It regrets whatever wrong impression the mistake may have caused the PNP and the men and women who serve in it.

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The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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PPI

Unity formula

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE FOCUS of political observers today will be on what may transpire in Tanay on the birthday celebration of former President Estrada, where opposition candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Panfilo Lacson are expected to show up in what may be a last-ditch effort to unite the opposition. Estrada earlier made an emotional appeal to the two candidates to unite in order to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo, and he is expected to heighten this appeal today, with the help of powerful pressure blocs, such as the Iglesia ni Cristo.

* * *

Several unity formulae are reportedly being forged. One is for Lacson to run for vice president under FPJ, with Loren Legarda sliding down to the KNP senatorial lineup on the promise that in an FPJ administration, she will become the Senate president. This is thought to be a strong combination: FPJ's popularity and Lacson's money and organization (run by the Zamora brothers and Lito Banayo, all veteran political strategists, against whom the ASO team of Senators Ed Angara, Tito Sotto and Tessie Oreta is no match whatsoever, it seems). But FPJ himself has shot down this formula and vows he wouldn't cast Legarda aside. The big stumbling block seems to be Angara, Loren's patron, who has been so insulted these past days by Lacson that it's difficult to see him agreeing to this solution.

* * *

Another unity formula being eyed is that Lacson would bow out of the race altogether, in exchange for getting a number of Cabinet posts in the FPJ administration, notably the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Justice, which will be "his kingdom," as an analyst put it. Frankly, however, this may not be an easy formula. Lacson has been quite smug about his superior organization and seemingly bottomless pocket of campaign funds, that it's hard to see him bowing out of the picture altogether. Moreover, reports say, his Chinese funders are not agreeable to backing FPJ—in other words, their money is non-transferable. Then too, some analysts are already seeing the "disintegration" of the FPJ machinery, so that it's hard to see why Lacson would give way to him.

By the way, the media reports about Susan Roces boxing an Iloilo city councilor on the stomach has to be the incredible additional nail on the FPJ campaign coffin. That boxing episode shatters somewhat the movie image of Roces as a sweet little woman altogether. Coming after the Sandra Aguinaldo episode (is Region 6 the Poe couple's Waterloo?), FPJ's campaign needed it like a hole in the head.

* * *

Unity, however, is a ticking clock, and the problem for the two opposition factions is that even assuming their two top leaders can unite either as running mates or with Lacson in mere supporting cast, shifting people and logistics support is not that easy to work out. What happens to their respective candidates at the local level and their ground troops? How do the two factions integrate those elements and make them work together harmoniously? At this stage, groups from each faction are said to be deserting to one or the other or to GMA's side. Moreover, if Lacson is going to fund FPJ's campaign, how much say would he insist on? It's easy to see Sotto battling Banayo, etc. But if they don't unite by this week, it's all over for the opposition.

* * *

Reports say Raul Roco's prostate cancer may have aggravated, and he would formally be bowing out of the race to seek extended treatment in the US. Since his illness, some pundits as well as pollsters have opined that his votes would benefit principally GMA. This was borne out by two mock elections conducted by Bantay Katarungan, headed by Sen. Jovito Salonga and Sedfrey Ordoñez, among its law student volunteers from seven leading law schools: the UP, Ateneo, San Beda, Lyceum, FEU, University of the East and UST. The first mock election was held about a month ago and the results were: zero for both GMA and FPJ, the majority going for Roco. The other day, however, another mock election was held on the premise that Roco was already out. The results were markedly different: still zero for FPJ, but now 17 for GMA; other votes were: 7 for Lacson, 6 for Bro. Eddie Villanueva while 5 still remained steadfastly for Roco. The dramatic leap for GMA was caused partly by the shift of Roco followers, expectedly among the youth, to her.

* * *

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In a sense, this offers greater prospects to the opposition than Raul Roco's disintegrating campaign does to the administration. For the administration, pocketing a few crumbs of support could potentially be a decisive advantage in the present close race between the President and Poe; but in terms of numbers, the Roco supporters who do decide to defect will overwhelmingly choose other fringe candidates—Lacson, or Eddie Villanueva—or still vote for Roco or boycott the elections, rather than vote for the President. Which candidates do a particular candidate's supporters dislike more? Chances are, Poe's followers dislike Lacson less than Lacson's followers dislike Poe, just as Roco's followers dislike Villanueva and Lacson less than they dislike the President.

Finally, there is the question of machinery and money. Who in the opposition is in a position to do more with what both camps have? Arguably, Lacson has more money and a more disciplined campaign. Poe has the numbers but has been saddled with a campaign machinery that is undisciplined and saddled with too many faces that are not much better, and often far worse, than what the administration offers. The Lacson campaign has much more that sets it apart from the administration than does Poe's campaign. Since the Chinese community is really the only community that generously donates money to campaigns during elections, which opposition camp, then, has a greater chance of using money to the best advantage in the crucial days leading up to the polls, and in the even more crucial counting to follow? Obviously, the Lacson camp. In the first place, Lacson would be trusted by generous Chinese donors to actually use the money for the campaign instead of pocketing it; and as a military man, he most likely would have a better chance at using the money for strategic advantage than the traditional political types surrounding Poe.

The big problem with this scenario, however, is that too many personalities in the Poe camp stand to lose face, position and privilege should Lacson become the standard-bearer of the opposition. Chief among the losers will be former President Estrada, who has kept Lacson at arms' length and invested his remaining personal and political prestige in Poe. After June 30, the fiction that Joseph Estrada remains the de jure president of the Philippines will become academic. As will the opposition argument that at present we have an illegitimate, extra-constitutional government. The May 10 elections will result in a return to the status quo ante Edsa II: which means the Estradas and Tatads of this world will be deprived of any pretensions to a moral cause, something Miriam Defensor-Santiago recognized early enough; Senators Ed Angara and Tito Sotto, who are already being blamed for the mess the Poe campaign is in; and soon-to-be former Sen. Tessie Oreta, who can be blamed for the fall of Estrada and who prudently refrained from running rather than suffer defeat. They will be out in the cold or, even if included in the enlarged Lacson tent, be reduced to a minor, supporting role.

In the end, the opposition is faced with the question of whether to put band aids on a severely wounded Poe campaign, or massively invigorate the Lacson campaign, thus confounding all the carefully built plans of the administration. Napoleon counseled audacity in war; the same applies to politics. Poe has not been audacious; Lacson has shown greater grit. And in the face of the President's grit, which has put her ahead of the pack, the opposition should be able to see the writing on the wall— or the ballots

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Breaking news

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

SOME readers of the INQUIRER have very high expectations about its editorial content. When they see something that, in their opinion, does not meet their reading standards, they do not hesitate to write, send an e-mail or call to complain.

Through these comments, the newspaper gets a feel of the readers' thoughts on how it lives up to (or deviates from) its commitment to "balanced news and fearless views."

A reader, Horace Infante, went beyond my perception of the newspaper's corps of loyal readers cum critics. He even noticed a change in the format of the front page of the INQUIRER in one issue and sought clarification about that situation.

He wrote: "I don't know if I was just disoriented that I actually saw two different banner headlines for the same INQUIRER issue last March 26, 2004. While in Quezon City, I saw the Lopezes' name in bold letters on the front page when I perused a copy of the newspaper at the sidewalk.

"I cannot quite recall the exact words, but the headline had something to do with the much publicized Maynilad deal. However, when I got home and took hold of my regular INQUIRER copy from my *suking* [favorite] newsstand, I saw a different headline from the one I read earlier in the Quezon City sidewalk. (I live in Manila, by the way.)

"It's unfortunate that I didn't buy the Quezon City copy to prove my point. Was I suffering from over fatigue that I got the headlines mixed up or was there a deliberate attempt to suppress the news? Can somebody enlighten me on this?"

Remat

The reader was not suffering from disorientation or over fatigue. Neither were the headlines mixed up nor was there an attempt on the part of the INQUIRER to suppress the news.

Yes, there were two versions of the INQUIRER's front page that day. The "one star" edition carried the banner "Info on Maynilad sought." The accompanying news was about the demand of presidential candidate Raul Roco and senatorial candidate Melanio "Batas" Mauricio Jr. for the court hearing the Maynilad case to make public the details of the government's plan to take over the financially troubled Maynilad Water Services from the Lopez family.

The "two star" edition bore the banner "Deal saves Lopezes P2B." This time, the report was about the contents of a document that the INQUIRER obtained from a reliable source showing that if the plan pushes through, the Lopezes stand to save P2.4 billion on top of being relieved of the obligation to remit P8 billion in unpaid concession fees to the government.

Here's how the change in banners happened: At the time the "one star" edition was cleared for printing at around 8:30 p.m. of the previous day, the latest news in the hands of the editorial staff on the Maynilad case was Roco's and Mauricio's demand for the disclosure of the terms of the government takeover. It was this "one star" edition that the reader first saw in Quezon City.

Later in the night, the staff got hold of a copy of a document that indicated that the proposed arrangement would be financially advantageous to the Lopezes. Since the latter news was more significant than the earlier report on the Maynilad case, the staff ordered a "remat" (or change in the format and contents of the earlier front page) of the newspaper to reflect this latest development.

Update

Thus, the banner and story that appeared in the "one star" edition were removed and replaced with ones that reflected the breaking news about the recently discovered document. It was this version, or "two star" edition, that the reader got from his news dealer.

There is nothing sinister or questionable about that action. Newspapers routinely make "remats" on news reports when, after an edition had been cleared for publication, there are late-breaking developments that deserve to be immediately brought to the readers' attention.

No self-respecting newspaper will allow itself to be the bearer of old or obsolete news. It always wants to publish the latest in newsworthy events, if not to be the first to break the news to the public. The readers want to know what's going on now and what may happen in the future.

With radio and television able to give up-to-the-minute and even on-the-spot reporting, newspapers are obliged to be as current and fresh as much as humanly possible in order to keep their readership.

"Remats" cost money, lots of money. The materials used for the original edition have to be discarded and a new set procured to meet the printing requirements of the new edition. But that's how the cookie crumbles in the newspaper industry. The additional expenses are a small price that newspapers have to pay to live up to their mission and, at the same time, maintain the patronage of their readers.

Error

Going to another subject matter, last April 11, the INQUIRER reported the daring Black Saturday escape from a jail in Basilan of 24 Abu Sayyaf members. With government troops on high alert during the Lenten season, the incident dealt a black eye to the country's anti-terrorist campaign.

A portion of the news read: "The mass escape was the third major breakout from a Philippine National Police jail the past two years. Pentagon kidnap leader Faisal Marahombsar slipped out from Camp Crame in June 2002, and Jemaah Islamiya leader Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi also from Camp Crame last year."

The description of the Basilan jail as belonging to the PNP drew a strong howl of protest from my friends in the PNP. They said it was inaccurate because the Basilan jail is under the control and supervision of the Basilan provincial government, not the PNP.

Additionally, except for a few municipal jails, the PNP has nothing to do with the administration of detention centers or prison houses in the country. The responsibility of managing the country's district, city and municipal jails has been assigned by law to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

The INQUIRER apologizes for the error. It regrets whatever wrong impression the mistake may have caused the PNP and the men and women who serve in it.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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OPINION

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Family matter, privacy

IN HER column in the April 17 issue of the INQUIRER, Rina Jimenez-David wrote about a recent complaint filed by Melissa Mercado-Martel against her husband, Robert Puyat Martel. Unfortunately, Jimenez's column quoted the complaint almost verbatim. Naturally, it only tells Mercado-Martel's version of events.

The Martel family does not want this issue in the media. This is a family dispute and the family, especially the children, would have preferred that this matter simply went through the normal process. A trial by publicity is not in accord with due process because there is no opportunity to sift through what is true and what is false. Even more unfortunate, everybody, including innocent victims like the children, end up the losers.

However, the damage is done. To restore even some basic fairness to this whole matter, we would like to state for the record the facts of the case. The facts are that on Oct. 15, 2003, Melissa Mercado-Martel issued an affidavit under oath that the injuries she sustained were the result of an accidental shooting. The investigating unit of the Makati Criminal Investigation Division, after conducting several investigative visits and confirmation of the execution of the affidavit, filed a report that the shooting was an accident.

The affidavit was executed under oath by Mercado-Martel with the assistance of a counsel. If both Mercado-Martel and her counsel are now saying that what was stated is false, then both of them may be guilty of perjury.

It is worthy to note that the spouses have already dissolved their conjugal property relations. Despite that and without obligation, Robert Martel has given financial support to his estranged wife and her family for the past years. Recently, Martel-Mercado has been demanding additional assistance not just for her but for her family. When her demands were not initially met, Mercado-Martel broke into the unit of Robert Martel and removed several boxes of personal properties. In addition, Mercado Martel, despite repeated requests, has failed to return jewelry held in trust for her daughter worth around US$400,000.

Again, we do not want a "trial by publicity." But to give our client his constitutionally guaranteed right to due process and fair play, we are compelled to write your publication. We hope that you can print this letter and after it is printed, it is the hope of the Martel family, especially the children, that this matter be simply left to the normal process and not be litigated in the media. As stated above, it is a family matter. The family would like to keep what is left of its privacy,

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counsel for the Martel family

Consumer voice

THE RECENT controversies affecting Meralco, Maynilad and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board underscore the urgent need for consumer representation in government regulatory agencies.

In most advanced democratic countries, government regulatory bodies include consumer representatives.

The 17th World Consumers Congress held in Lisbon, Portugal—attended by hundreds of consumer delegates from all over the world, representing people organizations, civil society groups and government regulatory bodies, including this lone consumer advocate from the Philippines—unanimously endorsed the inclusion of consumer representatives in all government regulatory bodies.

Had this been done in the Philippines, the decisions of our regulatory boards would have been made with an air of full disclosure and transparency, thus eliminating perceptions of hanky-panky and clandestine sweetheart deals.

It is most unfortunate that in our country, the interest and welfare of consumers are second only to that of businessmen. As a result, our consumers are exploited, abused and manipulated with the cold indifference of government.

Without the countervailing presence of a consumer representative, most regulatory bodies, going by their record, tend to become anti-consumers and pro-business.

It is high time that President Macapagal-Arroyo address this concern and issue an executive order directing the appointment of consumer representatives to government regulatory agencies. Such executive action will breathe life into the meaning of Section IX of Article XVI of the Philippine Constitution which guarantees consumer protection and welfare.

To institutionalize this proposal, the next Congress should pass a law mandating consumer representation in all government regulatory entities.

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The House, under Speaker Jose de Venecia's leadership, moved into a serious cost-cutting mode even before the huge budget deficit raised serious public concern.

In 1999, the House budget totaled P2.589.3 billion, already P700 million more than the P1.887 billion budget in 1998, the final year of Speaker De Venecia's second three-year term. In 2000, the House budget reached P3.248 billion, the peak before falling to P3.016 billion in 2001.

When De Venecia regained the House leadership in July 2001, he slashed the House budget for 2002 to P2.757 billion. This decision meant savings of nearly P300 million—the first time since 1999 the House realized any savings. For 2003, its budget rose slightly to P2.931 billion, still well within the ambit of austerity. The same budget has been adopted for 2004.

Rep. Robert Ace Barbers, House accounts committee chair, has pointed out significant House savings since 2002: a substantial reduction in fuel and electricity consumption, a decrease in the number of contractual employees and consultants, and a major cut in the number of foreign and domestic travel for members. Virtually all of the committee hearings were held in the Mitra Building inside the Batasan complex—against previous House practice.

There is no Speaker's fund and although the House grew in size with more party-list members joining the chamber, its budget has been reduced.

Compared to senators with P200 million each in public works funds, a House member is "allowed only to identify P65 million worth of public works projects," which are implemented by the DPWH in legitimate public bidding as priority district projects. Non-infrastructure projects are coursed through local government units and congressmen only identify those projects, having no part in their implementation.

The austere budget notwithstanding, the House in the 12th Congress produced a wealth of reform-oriented bills remarkable not just in number but also in the quality of their vision, driven by a sense of urgency, that time is running out on the country. In all, the House passed more than 1,000 bills—some of them becoming vital laws.

A total of 985 House bills were left stranded in the Senate—a total waste of money, time and intellectual exertion. They have to be refiled in the next Congress.

Unfortunately, the yardstick applied to measure how effective this Congress is has degenerated into a textbook accounting of budget vis-à-vis the number of laws it passed—not the social, financial and economic impact these laws have made on the national life.

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Soldiers stop party-list groups' caravans

GOVERNMENT soldiers stopped two separate caravans of party-list groups in Camarines Sur and Oriental Mindoro yesterday.

Leaders of the Bicol Regional People's Caravan complained of harassment after elements of the Army's 42th Infantry Battalion in Maludbalud, Tigaon, Camarines Sur stopped them yesterday.

The caravan was composed of six party-list groups seeking representation in Congress through the May 10 elections, and members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) in Bicol.

The participants were in Partido (in Camarines Sur) when they were stopped by the said Army unit led by Lt. Col. Nilo Perfecto at about 11 a.m. Lt. Col. Serafin Raymundo, however, said the soldiers' move was just a routine checkpoint measure in connection with the coming elections. The checkpoint, he said, was in front of the battalion's headquarters in Tigaon town.

The caravan leaders and military men argued for almost an hour, with the soldiers refusing to let them proceed but wanting to hold Bayan Muna Camarines Sur coordinator Eric Torrecampo in their custody and confiscate their streamers.

Carla Balatan, media liaison officer of the caravan and a regional staffer of Anak Pawis-Bicol, claimed that some soldiers even fired a gun on the air but Raymundo also denied this.

The caravan participants were allowed to proceed only after Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Villafuerte intervened on their behalf.

The party-list groups were in Partido to denounce the alleged series of disappearances of persons suspected of being sympathizers of the New People's Army.

Bayan said it has recorded 20 disappearances and recovered three dead bodies, including that of a female former rebel who had turned vendor.

In Oriental Mindoro, the caravan of some 250 members of the Anakpawis party-list group was also reportedly harassed by government soldiers.

"By our estimate, we have been made to stop every 40 minutes of the journey, and subjected to arrogant questioning by soldiers manning the checkpoints and the detachments," Anakpawis-Southern Tagalog coordinator Orlando Marcellana told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He said the soldiers asked questions to members of the caravan and conducted searches in their bags and other personal belongings.

"The military also threatened us after accusing us as being supporters of the New People's Army," he added. "The soldiers even cursed at the caravan members."

He said several of their members who answered back were punched on the arm and nape.

Marcellana said some soldiers also pointed guns at the heads of the younger men in the caravan, accusing them of being new NPA recruits. *Emir Emano Gamis, Juan Escandor Jr. and Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

GMA leaves wage hike issue to regional boards

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo said any adjustment in wages for workers in the private sector would be up to the regional wage boards amid a clamor from militant labor groups for a P125-hike in the daily minimum wage.

The President said in an interview with radio station dyOK in Iloilo City recently that it is up to the boards to determine the necessity of increasing the daily minimum wage. The minimum daily wage stands at P250 in the National Capital Region.

Citing the observation of international analysts, Ms Macapagal said the wage levels in the country have increased the fastest in the (Southeast Asian) region. She said new jobs especially in call centers and in the electronics and service sectors have been created.

"The average pay of wage earners overall is higher now because these are higher-paying jobs," she said.

The President also announced that if she is reelected, her administration will increase the pay of government employees.

She said she will implement a "reengineering in the bureaucracy" by offering an early retirement package for "redundant" employees who will be paid the amount equivalent to a month and half of their salaries for every year of service.

Funds for the retirement package will come from the World Bank, according to the President. She said the savings resulting from the retirement of employees will be channeled to increase the salaries of the remaining employees.

The militant Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) will lead nationally-coordinated protest actions to press for a P125 across-the-board increase in daily minimum wage.

KMU Chair Elmer Labog said support of candidates in the May 10 elections for their demand will be the basis for their political endorsements.

"For the past three years, the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration took the side of employers and refused to grant any substantial wage increase. The need for an urgent wage relief is overwhelming," Labog said in a statement.

Labog said the real value of the current minimum wages have sunk sharply. He said the actual value of the P250 daily minimum wage in the NCR is only a little more than P150, way below the P593 daily cost of living.

Pols, advocates sign pact on population

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Candidates for various offices in Pampanga and representatives of government and non-government organizations have signed a covenant that would push population, reproductive health and family planning in their electoral platforms.

The Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development Foundation (PLCPDF), organizer of the provincial policy conference on population management and reproductive health held here on Thursday, said 540 participants, including local candidates, took part in the covenant signing.

A statement from the PLCPDF said party-list groups representatives Rina Jimenez-David of Abanse! Pinay, Riza Hontiveros of Akbayan and Jorge Paterno of Butil had endorsed the covenant.

"We must be able to address the concerns of population and poverty in an integrated and comprehensive manner by reducing inequity in matters of access to our provincial resources," the two-page covenant said.

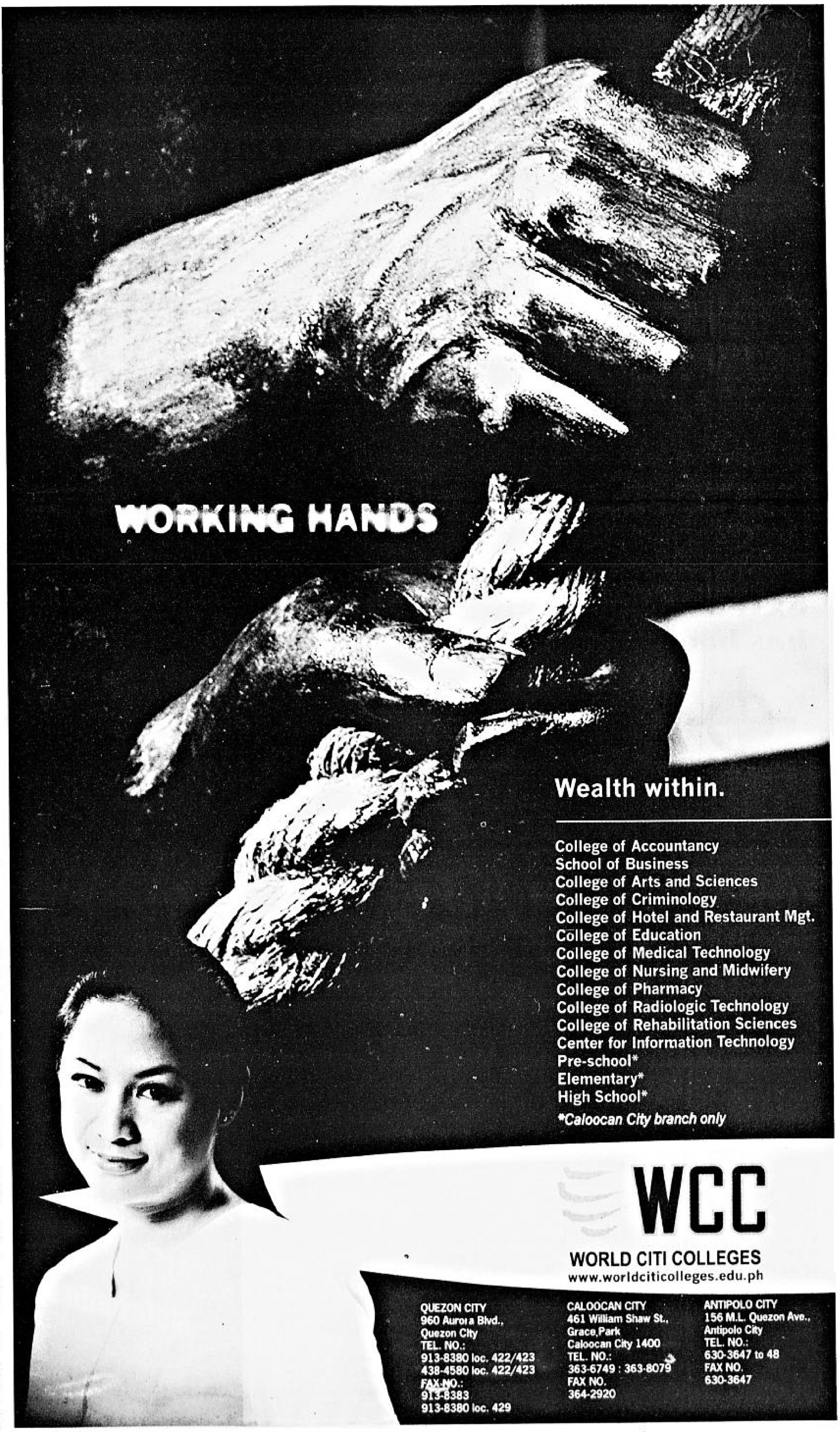
The signatories said "concerns over heavy in-migration should be checked by providing sufficient social services including health, housing, water and even education."

"Deliberate and long-term investment" in human development, it said, is a means to sustain growth in agriculture, fishery and industry.

The PLCPDF also prepared a brochure for candidates, that summarizes the 10 "critical issues" that it said every candidate should know.

The PLCPDF said the rapidly growing population contributes to the country's worsening poverty.

The candidates and officials who attended the covenant signing pledged to review local laws, including the allocation of budget for population, reproductive health and family planning. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



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Baguio architects want real, not concrete trees

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Architects here are trying to get a public consensus on one of Baguio's biggest jokes—a concrete pine tree on Session Road here.

In a new city landscape that will become the substance of a petition after the May 10 elections, the architects want a "living, breathing" pine tree planted on the site where the concrete tree now stands.

The proposal also includes the planting of at least 100 more pine trees around downtown Baguio, especially along Session Road.

The suggestion to remove the cement tree had drawn more applause in many forums where the re-conceptualized Baguio landscape had been presented, said Rafael Chan, principal architect of R.G. Chan and Associates.

Chan is part of a group of professionals and government architects who enrolled in the Saint Louis University (SLU) graduate program on environment and habitat planning. The group proposed a new design for Baguio.

Joseph Alabanza, former presidential adviser on urban affairs and head of the SLU urban design program, said these concepts were drawn up to signal the fight against "the uglification of Baguio."

The concrete pine tree was built by the Department of Public Works and Highways as part of the P5-million countryside development funded program of former Baguio Rep. Bernardo Vergara, now the city mayor.

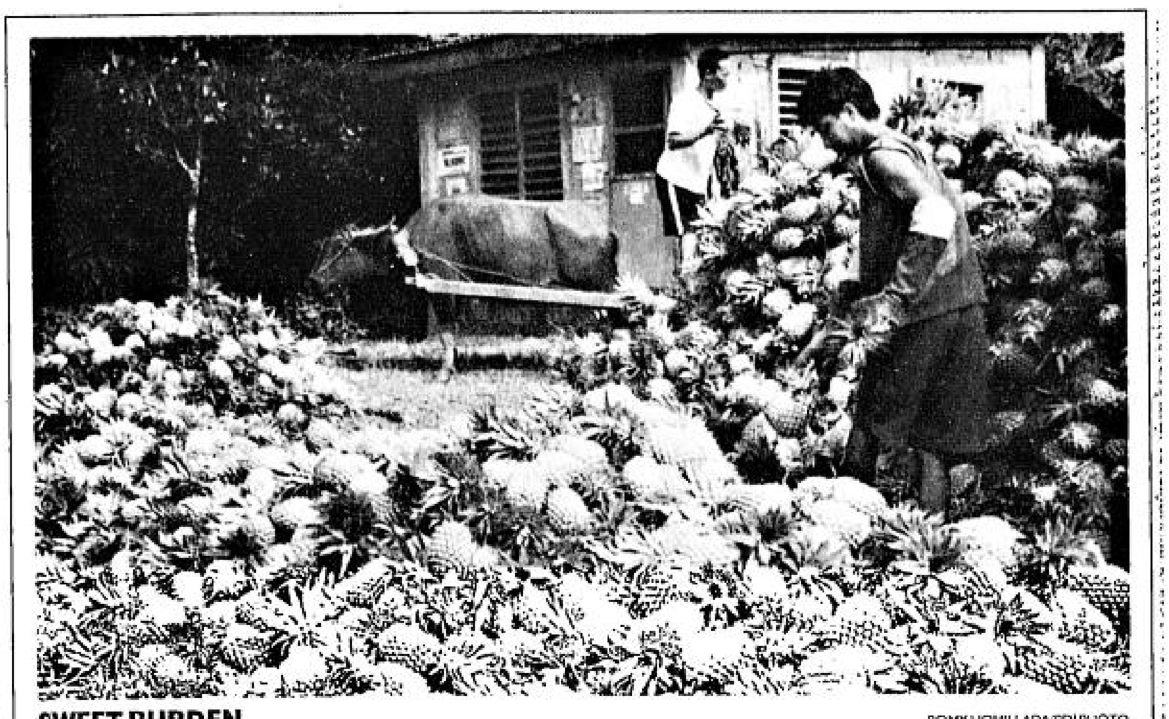
Its construction drew controversy at first because it overshadowed a large shrine of Jesus Christ, which was built by former Mayor Ramon Labo Jr.

But the concrete tree later became the butt of jokes from Baguio residents and visitors, who could not reconcile the monument's homage to the city's dwindling forest resources. Written at its base is "Plant me and protect me."

Alabanza said the plan to re-design the city is the academe's reaction to the crowding of downtown Baguio and the Burnham Park with high-rise buildings and shopping malls.

"I have stopped walking through Burnham Park," he said, due to the heavy traffic and vendors that have since taken over the park that was envisioned by Daniel Burnham, the American architect who designed Baguio for the American colonial government at the turn of the 20th century.

The professionals said they expect to link up with a group of Baguio residents who want to conserve Baguio as a heritage city. *With a report from Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



SWEET BURDEN

ROMY HOMILLADA/PDI PHOTO

This carabao will have his cart filled with pineapples as his masters sort out the ones that will be brought to the market in Macogon, Labo, Camarines Norte.

Bishop asks priests not to ask favors from pols

BAGUIO CITY—A bishop here said the Catholic Church has asked priests not to ask favors from politicians who would seek their blessing for the success of their political bids this year.

Bishop Carlito Cenzon of the Baguio-Benguet vicariate said they are also reminding parishioners of their duty to report priests who use their position to exact favors from politicians.

Cenzon said part of the activities of the Catholic Church's program "Ehem! Anti-Corruption Movement" is to reach out to priests and parishioners to avoid corruption, especially during the election season.

He said the movement was formed after Catholic Church officials, during the plenary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, evaluated reports on the relationships of priests and local politicians.

Cenzon said politicians who usually ask parish priests to bless them are the ones being asked to donate money for the needs of the parish.

"There are priests who say, 'Can you please donate (this and that)'?" he said.

Cenzon said the Catholic Church's policy of avoiding the endorsement of any candidate remains, "but the granting of blessings from God should not be denied (to those who seek them)."

Fernando Veridiano, a teacher in a local seminary, also hoped that priests, lay workers and parishioners would avoid soliciting funds from politicians.

Cenzon said they have been displaying anti-corruption posters in local churches and seminaries.

A poster read: "*Walang hihingi sa kandidato* (Do not ask anything from candidates) . . . Religious groups—No solicitations, please, for candles and altar repairs."

Cenzon said they are also asking youth groups and neighborhood associations not to solicit money for basketball courts, trophies for sports competitions, waiting sheds and garbage cans. *Desiree Caluza with a report from Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

More troops to be sent to Caraga

BUTUAN CITY—More Army troops will be deployed in the Caraga Region amid clashes between Army soldiers and communist guerrillas.

"We are providing troops to assist the PNP and Comelec in the conduct of honest, orderly and peaceful elections," Army chief Lt. Gen. Efren Abu told reporters.

Abu said the troops would beef up security in areas where the presence of communist rebels is strong, particularly in Surigao and Agusan del sur.

He, however, failed to disclose the number of Army soldiers to be deployed.

Since the start of the campaign, some politicians in the region got the ire of the communist rebels for failing to pay the permit-to-campaign fees.

Hostage

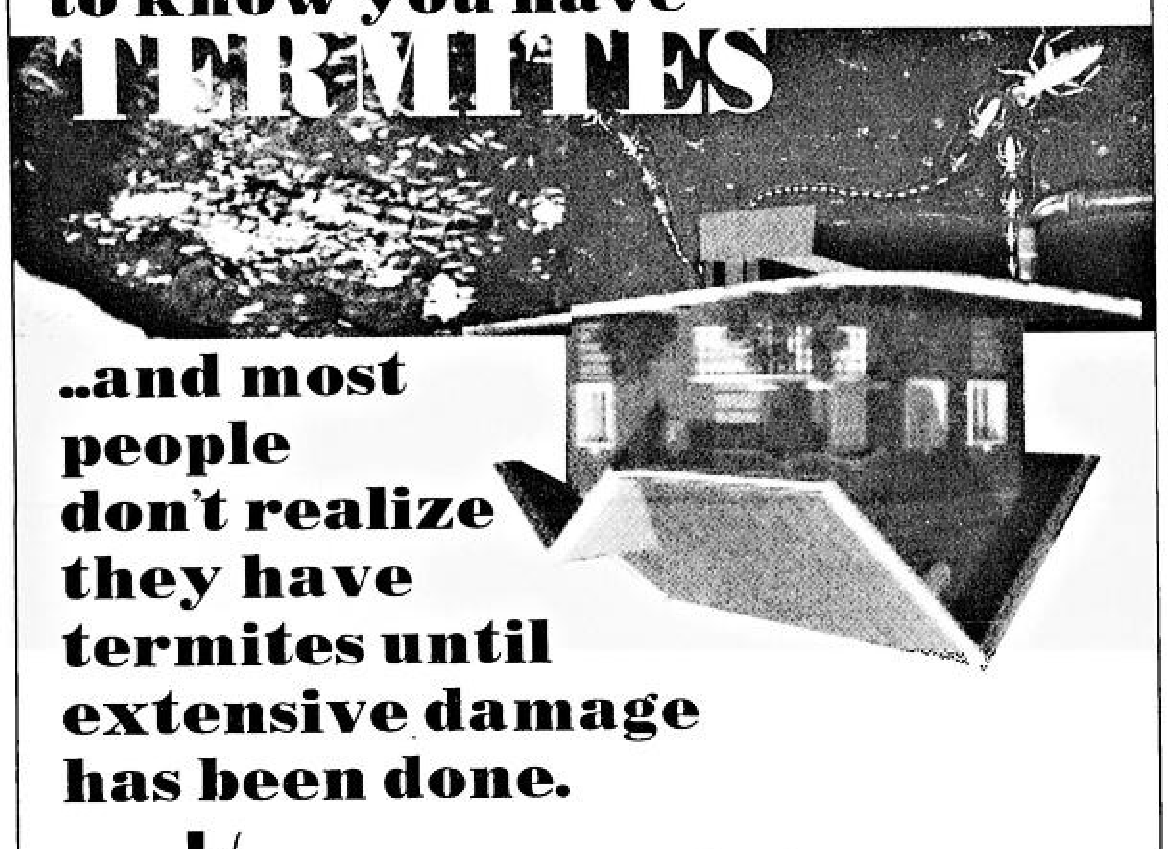
On Tuesday, New People's Army rebels held hostage an opposition mayoral candidate in Surigao del Sur and disarmed his two police escorts.

About 100 rebels held Tagbina mayoral candidate Armando Lunio and his police aides while campaigning in Sitio Greenfield in Barangay Sta. Juana, Tagbina.

Lunio and his companions were released hours after they allegedly paid an undisclosed amount of money.

On Thursday, a militiaman and a female soldier were killed in separate attacks in San Luis, Agusan del Sur.

Following intense military operations that day, the soldiers engaged a band of rebels, killing three guerrillas during a 15-minute clash in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. *Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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In the Philippines, AGENDA 2.5 EC is a trademark owned by Bayer CropScience that was approved to replace the brand name TERMIDOR 2.5 EC, a termiticide; MAXFORCE GEL on the other hand is a trademark of Bayer CropScience that would also replace Goliath Gel for cockroach control. Agenda 2.5 EC in the Philippines is exactly the same formulation containing exactly the same active ingredient as Termidor and Maxforce Gold is an improved formulation of Goliath Gel containing exactly the same active ingredient, ie fipronil.

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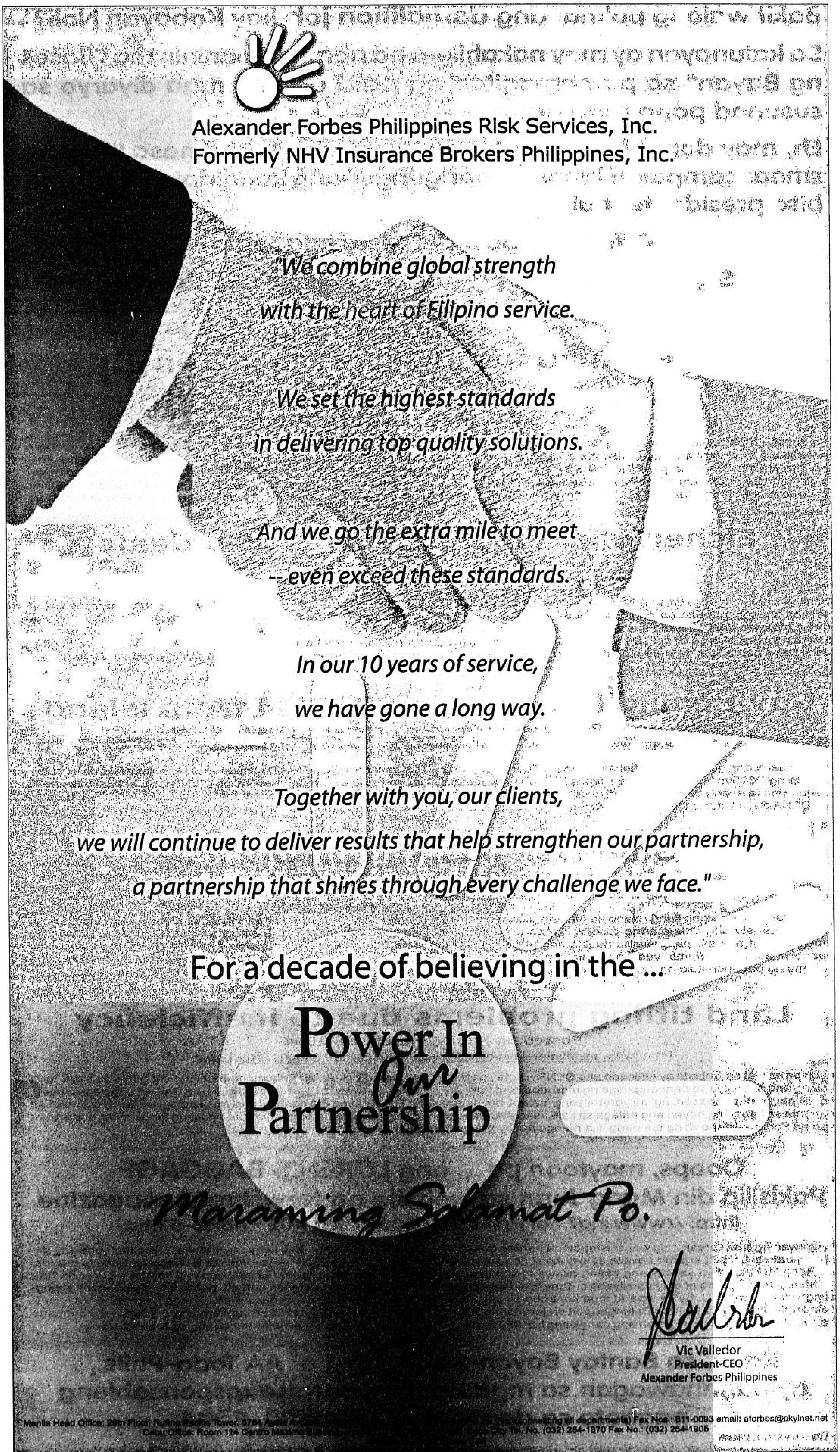

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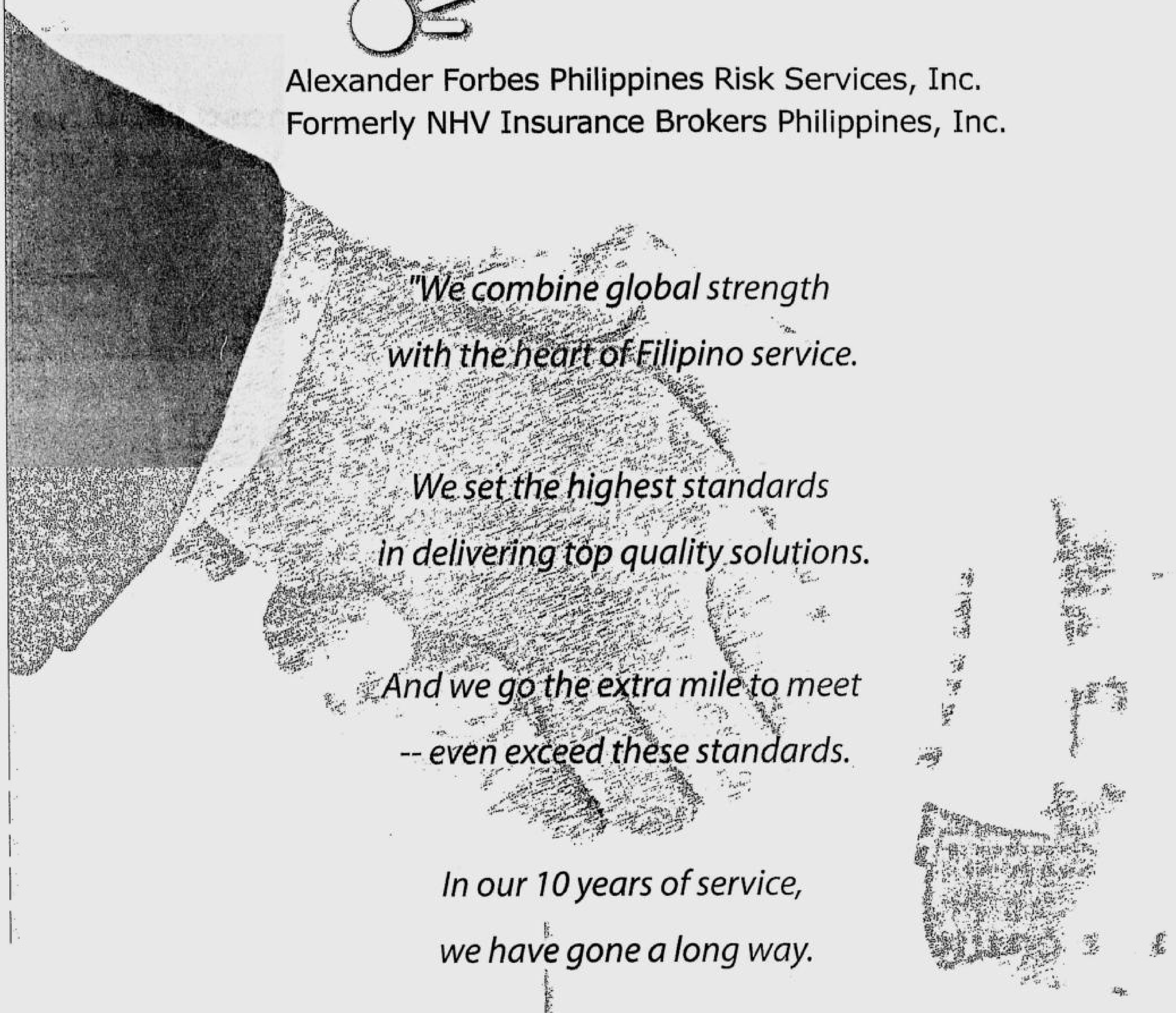

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Bakit walang puknat ang demolition job kay Kabayan Noli?

Sa katunayan ay may nakahilera na namang paninira sa "Boses ng Bayan" sa pamamagitan ng paid ads sa mga diyaryo sa susunod pang mga araw.

Eh, may dapat bang pagtakpan ang mga taong nasa likod ng smear campaign laban sa nangungunang kandidato sa pagka-bise presidente, huh?

Offense is best defense, talaga ha?

Sige, pakisilip Mang Juan nitong Special Report
sa The Manila Times website

The 'Fortunes' of Loren and Tony

Titling issue hounds Batangas islands

Posted on Monday, March 15, 2004

http://www.manilatimes.net/others/special/2004/mar/15/20040315spe1.html

Sa kabila ng pahayag ni Loren Legarda Leviste na **"his business is his business and my politics is my politics"**, ibinulgar ng The Manila Times na pinakikinabangan ng lady solon ang mga umano'y kinamkam na lupa sa Nasugbu, Batangas ng kanyang asawang si Tony, tulad ng Pulong Calayo (Lorelie I) at Punta Fuego (Lorelie 2) na pawang ipinangalan sa kanya pati na ang Pulong Kutad, Isla Punta Buri at Pulong Mugiw, ang hitik sa yaman ng kalikasan na Fortune Island ay mga pag-aari ng gobyerno ngunit napasakamay ni Tony matapos umanong gamitin ni Loren ang kanyang impluwensiya bilang isang brodkaster at senadora.

Fisherfolk bemoan Leviste land deals

Posted on Tuesday, March 16, 2004

http://www.manilatimes.net/others/special/2004/mar/16/20040316spe1.html

Dahil sa sinasabng kasakiman ng asawa ni Loren Legarda Leviste sa lupain, naging biruan ng mga taga-Sito Ilog at Ibayo sa Barangay Wawa, Nasugbu ang kuwentong kahit mga pawikan ay lumalangoy pailalim sa dagat sa tuwing makikita si Tony Leviste dahil baka pati ang mga ito'y mapatituluhan. Ngunit hindi biro ang pagkakagutom ng may 300 pamilya ng mga mangingisda sa Wawa dahil na rin sa P330 milyong proyekto na main drainage sa Lico river ni Tony na pinondohan umano ng CDF ni Loren. Habang walang makain ang pamilya ng mga mangingisda, ginagawa namang high class na yatch club o marina ang Lico river.

Gov't could have reaped P395M from island

Posted on Wednesday, March 17, 2004

http://www.manilatimes.net/others/special/2004/mar/17/20040317spe1.html

Kumita sana ang gobyerno at hindi ang asawa ni Loren Legarda Leviste ng P395 milyon sa Fortune Islands sa loob ng siyam na buwan simula noong 1996 kung hindi ginipit ng lady solon si dating DENR Sec. Antonio Ceriles, ayon sa ulat ng website. Nakalusot lamang si Ceriles sa Commission on Appointments na kinabibilangan ni Loren nang ibasura ng DENR ang imbestigasyon sa kuwestiyonableng pagkakatitulo ng Fortune Islands sa mga kamag-anak ng mag-asawa, ayon pa sa website report.

Small islands, big problems

Posted on Thursday, March 18, 2004

http://www.manilatimes.net/others/special/2004/mar/18/20040318spe1.html

Ang malaking palaisipan kung paano nakuha ng asawa ni Loren Legarda Leviste ang mga **marine reserve areas** tulad ng Fortune island at ang iba pang maliliit na isla ang nagbigay daan upang matanto ng taumbayan ang malaking kapalpakan sa sistema ng pagpapatitulo ng mga lupain sa bansa. Kilala bilang isang kilabot na **landseeker,** madali umanong nalusutan ng dating gobernador ang napakaraming butas ng batas at sistema ng **land titling** kung kaya't umano'y nakuha niya ang mga lupaing mayaman sa kalikasan at kasaysayan sa tulong na rin ni ng kanyang asawang si Loren, dagdag pa sa website report,

Land titling problems due to inefficiency

Posted on Friday, March 19, 2004

http://www.manilatimes.net/others/special/2004/mar719/20040319spe1.html

Ayon pa sa ulat sa website ay aminado ang DENR na may pagkukulang ang ahensiya sa pangangalaga ng mga lupain ng gobyerno. Hindi matutumbasan ng milyon-milyong salapi na dapat napunta sa kaban ng bayan ang halaga sa kalikasan at kasaysayan ng Fortune Island at ng iba pang isla na ngayon ay pawang mga resort clubs na umaani ng mahigit P40.5 milyon kada taon para sa asawa ni Loren Legarda Leviste. Ngunit ang pagkukulang ng DENR at ng iba pang ahensiya sa lupain ay isang suliranin na lalong pinalala ng paghahangad ng isang landseeker at pagkunsinte ng isang senadora.

Ooops, mayroon pa ... ang LOREN'S BAGGAGE

Pakisilip din Mang Juan sa website ng Newsbreak magazine

(http: //www.inq7.net / nwsbrk / 2004 / feb / 02 / nbk 6-5.htm

Inilarawan ng Newsbreak mag website report na parang dumampot ng bato si Loren Legarda Leviste at ipinukpok ito sa sariling ulo nang kumalas siya sa kanyang dating asawa at sumama sa 'di hamak na matanda at may pamilyang si Tony. Sa dami ng kasong kinakaharap ni Tony sa lupa at mga kontrobersiyang kinasangkutan tulad ng P2.9 bilyon Batangas port project noong 2001, halos ayaw nang gamitin ni Loren ang pangalang **LEVISTE** upang hindi maapektuhan ang kanyang imeyds.. Pero matapos ang imbestigasyon ng The Manila Times at Newsbreak website reports, lumilitaw na pawang kasinungalingan ang kataga ni Loren na **"his business is his business and my politics is my politics"** sapagkat sinasabing siya ang nasa likod ng mga negosyo ni Tony at si Tony naman ang nasa likod ng kanyang pulitika... mula umano sa Senado, bise presidente hanggang sa Malakanyang.

Kami, sa Bantay Bayan Foundation at AA Toda-Phils.,
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pagboto sa darating na Mayo 10, 2004

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FPJ allies insist that Lacson withdraw from race

From page A1

PANFILO "Ping" Lacson and Fernando Poe Jr.: Pressure builds for opposition unity.

Honasan appealed to Lacson, his mistah in Class '72 of the Philippine Military Academy, to recall the basic principles they learned during their cadet days.

"These are unity of command and the principle of objectives," Honasan said.

Honasan is in charge of the KNP's "Bantay Balota" group which was formed to counter what the opposition believes to be the administration's plan to cheat in the May 10 polls.

"It defies logic for one to believe that the chances of the opposition to win are much greater if the opposition is divided," he said.

Fingers crossed

Unless the opposition unites this week, "unification will become utterly impossible," KNP senatorial candidate Didagen Dilangalen warned.

Other allies of Poe are hoping that the opposition could be unified after the meeting.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed that they will come up with a unified opposition," Sen. Vicente Sotto III, Poe's personal campaign manager, said.

Reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he was hoping for the best.

But there's a hitch. No one wants to give way.

"The only hitch in the unification of the opposition is that both of us want to go all the way for the presidency," Lacson said. "I don't intend to slide down and it seems he also doesn't want to."

Pimentel said Poe was not likely to give way to Lacson either. He said the unification of the opposition "was not an essential ingredient for an FPJ victory."

He said he was confident Poe would still win the elections. The senator conceded, however, that it would "easier" if there would be a unification.

Birthday wish

Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada, another KNP senatorial candidate, said there was "no way" that Poe would give up his bid for the presidency.

Jinggoy said Lacson should take his cue from his father, the deposed President, who had endorsed Poe as the opposition's standard-bearer.

"Yes, in order for the opposition to win," Jinggoy said when asked if Lacson should follow Estrada's lead.

The elder Estrada said his birthday wish was for Poe and Lacson to unify. He said Lacson should give way because he was still young and "can be a sure winner for president in 2010."

In a taped message smuggled out of his detention center, Estrada called on his supporters to vote Ms Macapagal out of office.

"Show your opposition to this illegal regime that has seized the rights of the people," Estrada said, referring to the Macapagal administration that took power in 2001 after a popular uprising ousted Estrada.

A Poe victory will be beneficial to Estrada who "can never expect justice under the present administration," Arnold Obina, convenor of the Kilos Para sa Bagong Umaga, said. Estrada is on trial on plunder charges.

Poe's running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, said Poe and Lacson might chance upon each other at Estrada's birthday celebration in Tanay, Rizal.

Legarda said that if this happened, Poe and Lacson would "talk heart to heart, man to man."

She noted that Estrada "exerts great influence on the two," being a "close friend" to both.

But Lacson said that although he wanted to greet his former boss in the Philippine National Police and in the defunct Presidential Anti-Crime Commission, his schedule might not allow for a meeting with Estrada. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and Volt Contreras, Christian V. Esguerra and AFP*

Comelec reminds parties of last-minute changes

From page A1

that while the Comelec would accept last-minute changes in the slates, those who do so would be "at a natural disadvantage" because the poll body would not have enough time to inform the voters about the changes.

"We can inform our election officers. We can easily call them. But the problem of any failure to inform the voters is no longer our fault," Abalos told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Election rules allow political parties to substitute their candidates until "mid-day on election day," which is May 10, but it will be almost logistically impossible for the poll body to disseminate the information to the public at this point, Comelec officials said.

Abalos advised the political parties to seriously consider the condition of the country's terrain and coastal towns which, he said, are very hard to reach in a few days.

Confusion

"The assessment is theirs, not ours," Abalos said when asked the ideal period for filing changes in a slate. He said the Comelec should not be blamed if 11th-hour changes would result in the loss of votes due to confusion among the voters.

Mila Desamito, Comelec education and information officer, said any changes in the lineup of political parties, such as substitution or withdrawal, should be submitted to the Comelec in writing not later than noon on May 10.

With only 20 days left before the elections, speculation is rife that the opposition would unite to present a stronger candidate against President Macapagal-Arroyo, who was shown leading recent surveys. Actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson are set to meet today to discuss a possible unification. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Desamito said election officers in the country's 1,500 cities and municipalities were on standby for word from the Comelec central office in Manila on the latest changes.

The election officers, who had been required to have mobile phones, are to be issued P2,000 worth of phone loads monthly to ensure communications with the central office.

Desamito said the field personnel are the ones assigned to change any data on the election returns, which had already been printed. The returns contain the names of all national candidates and the posts they are seeking.

"The sooner they make changes, the better so we will have time to inform everyone … It is going to be a big job for the Comelec, but we will do our best," she said.

The Comelec education and information department is compiling all contact numbers of the election officers to facilitate communications during the election period.

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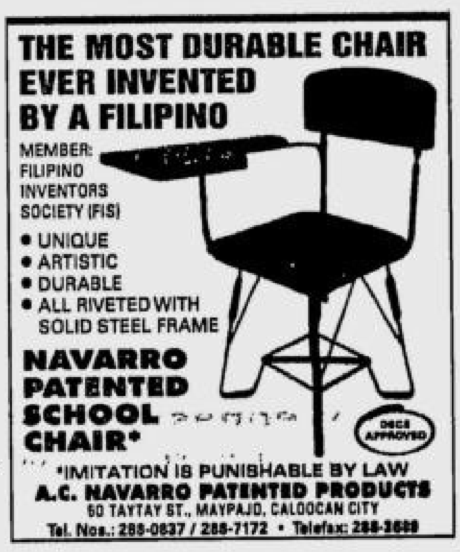

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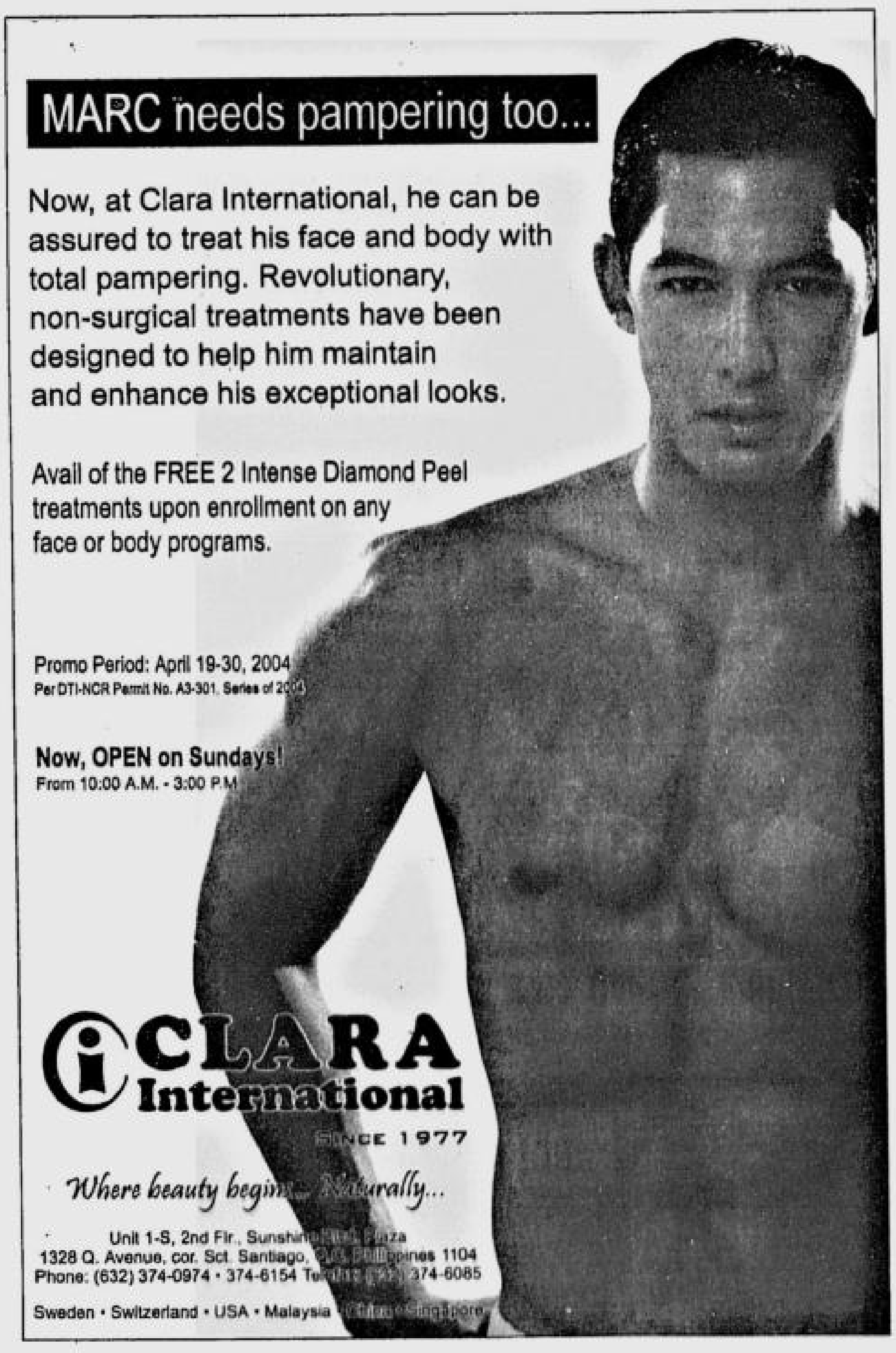

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FPJ allies insist that Lacson withdraw from race

From page A1

PANFILO "Ping" Lacson and Fernando Poe Jr.: Pressure builds for opposition unity.

Honasan appealed to Lacson, his mistah in Class '72 of the Philippine Military Academy, to recall the basic principles they learned during their cadet days.

"These are unity of command and the principle of objectives," Honasan said.

Honasan is in charge of the KNP's "Bantay Balota" group which was formed to counter what the opposition believes to be the administration's plan to cheat in the May 10 polls.

"It defies logic for one to believe that the chances of the opposition to win are much greater if the opposition is divided," he said.

Fingers crossed

Unless the opposition unites this week, "unification will become utterly impossible," KNP senatorial candidate Didagen Dilangalen warned.

Other allies of Poe are hoping that the opposition could be unified after the meeting.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed that they will come up with a unified opposition," Sen. Vicente Sotto III, Poe's personal campaign manager, said.

Reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he was hoping for the best.

But there's a hitch. No one wants to give way.

"The only hitch in the unification of the opposition is that both of us want to go all the way for the presidency," Lacson said. "I don't intend to slide down and it seems he also doesn't want to."

Pimentel said Poe was not likely to give way to Lacson either. He said the unification of the opposition "was not an essential ingredient for an FPJ victory."

He said he was confident Poe would still win the elections. The senator conceded, however, that it would "easier" if there would be a unification.

Birthday wish

Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada, another KNP senatorial candidate, said there was "no way" that Poe would give up his bid for the presidency.

Jinggoy said Lacson should take his cue from his father, the deposed President, who had endorsed Poe as the opposition's standard-bearer.

"Yes, in order for the opposition to win," Jinggoy said when asked if Lacson should follow Estrada's lead.

The elder Estrada said his birthday wish was for Poe and Lacson to unify. He said Lacson should give way because he was still young and "can be a sure winner for president in 2010."

In a taped message smuggled out of his detention center, Estrada called on his supporters to vote Ms Macapagal out of office.

"Show your opposition to this illegal regime that has seized the rights of the people," Estrada said, referring to the Macapagal administration that took power in 2001 after a popular uprising ousted Estrada.

A Poe victory will be beneficial to Estrada who "can never expect justice under the present administration," Arnold Obina, convenor of the Kilos Para sa Bagong Umaga, said. Estrada is on trial on plunder charges.

Poe's running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, said Poe and Lacson might chance upon each other at Estrada's birthday celebration in Tanay, Rizal.

Legarda said that if this happened, Poe and Lacson would "talk heart to heart, man to man."

She noted that Estrada "exerts great influence on the two," being a "close friend" to both.

But Lacson said that although he wanted to greet his former boss in the Philippine National Police and in the defunct Presidential Anti-Crime Commission, his schedule might not allow for a meeting with Estrada. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and Volt Contreras, Christian V. Esguerra and AFP*

Comelec reminds parties of last-minute changes

From page A1

that while the Comelec would accept last-minute changes in the slates, those who do so would be "at a natural disadvantage" because the poll body would not have enough time to inform the voters about the changes.

"We can inform our election officers. We can easily call them. But the problem of any failure to inform the voters is no longer our fault," Abalos told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Election rules allow political parties to substitute their candidates until "mid-day on election day," which is May 10, but it will be almost logistically impossible for the poll body to disseminate the information to the public at this point, Comelec officials said.

Abalos advised the political parties to seriously consider the condition of the country's terrain and coastal towns which, he said, are very hard to reach in a few days.

Confusion

"The assessment is theirs, not ours," Abalos said when asked the ideal period for filing changes in a slate. He said the Comelec should not be blamed if 11th-hour changes would result in the loss of votes due to confusion among the voters.

Mila Desamito, Comelec education and information officer, said any changes in the lineup of political parties, such as substitution or withdrawal, should be submitted to the Comelec in writing not later than noon on May 10.

With only 20 days left before the elections, speculation is rife that the opposition would unite to present a stronger candidate against President Macapagal-Arroyo, who was shown leading recent surveys. Actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson are set to meet today to discuss a possible unification. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Desamito said election officers in the country's 1,500 cities and municipalities were on standby for word from the Comelec central office in Manila on the latest changes.

The election officers, who had been required to have mobile phones, are to be issued P2,000 worth of phone loads monthly to ensure communications with the central office.

Desamito said the field personnel are the ones assigned to change any data on the election returns, which had already been printed. The returns contain the names of all national candidates and the posts they are seeking.

"The sooner they make changes, the better so we will have time to inform everyone … It is going to be a big job for the Comelec, but we will do our best," she said.

The Comelec education and information department is compiling all contact numbers of the election officers to facilitate communications during the election period.

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Fame, family dominate race for seats in Senate

From page A1

generational shift is taking place in the Senate, with parents making way for sons and daughters.

Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada, another celebrity senatorial contender, makes much of the fact that his father Joseph Estrada was senator and president.

Not that Erap was outstanding in either post, but the name recall and the former President's residual popularity are boosting the poll ratings of Jinggoy, an actor and former mayor of San Juan, Metro Manila.

Even former Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, despite a campaign anchored on his being "Mr. Palengke," also has commercials trumpeting the fact that his father was once senator and his grandfather, a former president.

Fame and family: These about sum up the main characteristics of those who want to be in the 24-member, nationally elected Senate, which is considered to be a training ground for future presidents.

From independence up to the fall of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, all but one of the presidents were lawyers and former senators. The lone exception was Ramon Magsaysay, a commerce graduate who became defense secretary and congressman before becoming president in 1953.

Replica of old

Platforms and performance seem to matter little in the race for Senate seats.

So far, the poll surveys and the campaign commercials show that this year's senatorial race is a contest that will largely be won by those who have lineage or are celebrities—or both.

The incoming Senate, therefore, is likely to be a replica of the current one.

Apart from family and celebrity, the present Senate is also a very wealthy one, with a quarter having assets of more than P100 million. In addition, it is mostly male (only three of the 24 senators elected in 2001 are women) and middle-aged (the average age in 2001 was 59).

And the law is the most preferred field of study among senators, a third of them having law degrees.

The profile of the current contenders is very similar.

Most—77 percent—are more than 50 years old. The average age is 57, although the minimum age for qualifying for the Senate is 35. The candidates are also mostly men (only 10 of the 48 are women). Moreover, 42 percent, or nearly one in every two senatorial candidates, has a law degree.

The great majority—30 candidates or 63 percent—were born in either Metro Manila (25 percent) or Luzon (38 percent).

In the current Senate, the proportion is 83 percent, with nine of the 24 senators having been born in Manila and 11 in Luzon, leaving the Visayas and Mindanao underrepresented in the Upper House.

House of the elite

Since 1946, the Senate has been the most powerful assembly of men and women in the country.

Thus, the composition of the Senate is the best indicator of the class, demographic and other characteristics of the most exclusive section of the Philippine elite.

In the past, the premium was on family, with those who come from wealthy families that have been in public office for generations having the edge in senatorial races.

With voters having to write out the names of candidates on a ballot, instead of ticking them from a list, or voting for parties rather than individuals, those with names associated with public office have traditionally performed better in the polls.

That remains true up to now. Yet since the fall of Marcos, celebrity status—whether from the cinema, television or sports—has also been making the difference in senatorial elections.

While the House of Representatives remains the bastion of local power and of families with a local political base, the Senate is a contested field where, at the moment, celebrity power dominates, easing out the traditional political clans and paving the way for the entry of new men and women to that most exclusive elite assembly.

In their parents' trail

Half of the members of the current Senate are still from political families. Unsurprisingly, 18 of the 48 senatorial contenders, or 38 percent, have at least one relative in an elective post.

Five senatorial candidates, in fact, have parents who were in the Senate themselves. The fathers of Bong Revilla, Estrada, Roxas and John "Sonny" Osmeña (who is seeking reelection) were senators, as was Amina Rasul's mother Santanina, who was elected in 1987 and 1992.

The grandfathers of Osmeña, 69, and Roxas, 46, were also senators, as were those of Didagen Dilangalen, 50, and Maria Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal, 46.

The father-in-law of Sen. Robert Jaworski, who also wants another term in the Upper House, is the outgoing Sen. Ramon Revilla.

Jaworski, however, is a celebrity in his own right, having been a star basketball player and coach before making a big leap to the Senate in 1998. He is one of the prime examples of the "celebritification" of that chamber, a trend that can be interpreted as the democratization of an exclusive body once reserved only for the wealthy, the well-born, or the intellectually brilliant.

'Exclusivity of stardom'

At the same time, though, this trend introduces a new kind of exclusivity in that most exclusive House: the exclusivity of stardom.

Judging from the poll ratings, it is likely that the 13th Senate will be as packed with celebrities as the outgoing one.

Five contenders are from show business. Macho stars Bong Revilla, Jinggoy Estrada and Lito Lapid are in the top 10, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey. Lower down in the ratings are actresses Boots Anson-Roa and Pilar Pilapil.

In addition, three candidates are currently in broadcasting: Pia Cayetano, talk show host Jose "Jay" Sonza and commentator-lawyer Melanio "Batas" Mauricio. Two are former broadcasters: Orlando Mercado and Eddie Ilarde.

Three others are politicians who currently host or until recently hosted their own radio or TV chat shows: top contender and former Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, former Sen. Ernesto Maceda and former Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla.

In all, eight candidates, about 17 percent, are in broadcasting. These, together with the five show biz contenders, add up to 14 wannabes from media and show biz, or 30 percent of all candidates.

In the current Senate, nine senators (nearly 40 percent) owed their election to celebrity power, either because they were celebrities themselves or were married to one.

Aside from Jaworski, they included Ramon Revilla and comedian/TV host Vicente Sotto III, TV anchors Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda (both of whom are now running for vice president), and the late TV host and lawyer Renato Cayetano.

Those who married into celebrity were lawyer Francis Pangilinan, whose wife is "megastar" Sharon Cuneta; former Batangas Rep. Ralph Recto, who married movie actress Vilma Santos; and medical doctor Luisa Ejercito, who is the spouse of action film star-turned-politician Joseph Estrada.

Eclipsed by show biz

Thus, in the 12th Senate, the established clans have been eclipsed by newer show biz- and media-based political families, like the Estradas, Revillas, and Cayetanos.

But since Edsa I, yet other sources of senators have emerged: the military and the police, which now compete with big business and law. Each of these services has two "representatives" in the Senate: Rodolfo "Pong" Biazon and Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan for the military, and Robert Barbers and Panfilo "Ping" Lacson for the police.

In the May elections, Biazon and Barbers are seeking reelection while Lacson is gunning for the presidency.

The likes of Biazon and Barbers already have a foot in the Senate door, if only because those who have held public office have better chances of being elected. Judging from past Congresses, neophytes rarely make it to the Senate unless they have fame or family.

In the 12th Senate, there were few newcomers, as even the celebrities who had been elected to that body in previous years were by then on their second or third terms.

The only really new faces elected to the Senate in 2001 were Noli de Castro and Loi Ejercito, again an indication that the new blood that is being infused into the Upper House comes from the world of celebrity. The others on their first Senate term were either from the House, like Joker Arroyo, or the military and police, like Lacson.

Name recall factor

Unsurprisingly, 13 (27 percent) of the current crop of candidates are either incumbent or former senators, many of whom will likely be reelected, if only because of the name recall factor: Heherson Alvarez, Barbers, Biazon, Enrile, Ernesto Herrera, Ilarde, Jaworski, Maceda, Mercado, Osmeña, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Francisco Tatad.

Five of the candidates are from the military or the police: apart from reelectionists Barbers and Biazon, they are Alfredo Lim, Ramon Montaño and Ismael Aparri.

Career-wise, senators tend to go up the ranks of public office.

Thus, it is not surprising that 56 percent of this year's contenders have held government posts. Apart from the former senators, 25 percent were former congressmen and 27 percent were local officials.

In addition, 38 percent held executive posts. Three were secretaries of the interior and local government (Barbers, Lim and Pimentel); two were defense secretaries (Enrile and Mercado); and two more headed the environment department (Alvarez and Maceda).

Wealth sets them apart

Wealth is another characteristic that sets senators apart.

In the post-Marcos Congress, the net worth of senators is about 60 percent more than the average net worth of those in the House.

In the current Congress, one in every four senators has assets of over P100 million, compared to only one in 10 representatives.

And while the business interests of those in the Senate are as diverse as the interests of those in the House of Representatives, most of the senators—especially those elected in more recent years—come from new wealth rather than old, as indicated by the relatively small percentage who own agricultural land.

In comparison, nearly half of all representatives in the post-Marcos Houses own agricultural land.

Nearly all the senators—75 percent in the 12th Congress—have interests in real estate, a much bigger proportion than in the House, where real estate is also the dominant interest. Only three senators in the 12th Congress did not declare any business interest.

Today's senators are richer than their predecessors. The average assets of the members of the current Senate is P59.4 million, compared to only P32.9 million in the previous Senate.

In terms of education, all but two of the 24 current senators have college degrees, the exceptions being Blas Ople (recently deceased) and Sergio Osmeña III (John Osmeña's cousin), both self-taught men who are acknowledged to be among the most conscientious and well-prepared among the senators.

Similarly, data currently available show that all but two of the 48 senatorial contenders have college degrees. The two candidates who finished only high school—actors Bong Revilla and Lito Lapid—are also likely to be among the newest senators of the land.

Unlike Ople and Osmeña, however, the two actors are less prepared for the legislative work ahead of them. They may have to lessen the swaggering and do a lot more homework if they want to catch up with their colleagues.

Sheila S. Coronel and Yvonne T. Chua with additional research by Vinia M. Datinguinoo and Avigail Olarte.

(For more information on senatorial and other candidates, log on to www.i-site.ph.)

Last chance for opposition unity talks to stop GMA

From page A1

bureau in protest against the alleged "meddling" in their work of Sen. Vicente Sotto III, who has been sidelined as overall campaign manager of Poe.

SWS rating

As if the squabbling was not enough, another piece of bad news assailed the opposition camp, struggling to repair its sputtering campaign engine, as the Social Weather Stations published a survey report showing an increase in the net satisfaction rating of the President's performance.

The report was based on the survey of March 21-29, which also found the President and Poe locked in a statistical tie. The survey found that 55 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the President's performance, while 25 percent were dissatisfied, or a plus-30 net satisfaction rating. It also showed a plus-35 net satisfaction rating on preparing for a free and peaceful elections.

The finding was a marked improvement of the President's net satisfaction rating nationwide over a six-month period.

November survey

In the November 2003 survey, SWS found that 43 percent were dissatisfied with the President's performance and 40 percent were satisfied, or a net rating of minus-3 percent. While satisfaction rating is far from being a measure of voting preference, a high rating reflects a positive election environment that can only boost an election campaign.

More fundamentally important than whether the President can sustain her momentum or whether the opposition can paper over its cracks and present a united front is the challenge that should occupy the voters' minds at this stage. This election presents the people a break out of a presidency that has been limping in running the country since 2001. The voters face the test of electing this time a government that can rule effectively.

Free, honest polls

It is therefore extremely important that first, the election should be conducted freely, without cheating. The primary aim of this election is to elect a government that has electoral legitimacy. An election seriously tainted by fraud will not give a new government legitimacy and would be inviting serious political unrest.

An honest election is, therefore, the primary responsibility of the administration, which has the machinery and powers to keep it so. With the President already showing signs of gaining momentum, the responsibility of ensuring clean and honest elections falls heavily on the shoulders of the administration.

Ensuring clean elections is a precondition to being able for a new government to rule effectively. An equally important precondition is that the voters should give the new leadership a large margin and broad legislative support, especially in the Senate, to avoid the pitfall of standoffs that have crippled the administration during the past four years.

Poll surveys indicate a 6-6 or 7-5 result between the administration and opposition lineup. Such a result foreshadows a hung Senate and, worse, a repetition of the gridlocks in the Senate. There is nothing more destabilizing for a new government and more unsettling for business confidence than a Senate in the perpetual grip of stalemates.

The less than four years of the Macapagal administration spelled a crippled government—hamstrung by two important circumstances. The first was that the President took power not through a direct electoral mandate but by the extra-electoral method of "people power" that toppled Joseph Estrada after the military withdrew support from his government.

Hung Senate

This method of accession gave rise to challenges to the legitimacy of the new administration, not only in the Supreme Court but more so a rebellion by Estrada supporters a year after Ms Macapagal took office. The 2002 off-year elections for the Senate resulted in the election of enough anti-Macapagal senators to create a hung Senate.

The experience of the legislative gridlocks should be a strong reason why the next president should be given a reasonably large mandate—though not necessarily a majority (Estrada won with only 40 percent of the vote)—and why a new government should have a Senate with something more manageable than a 50-50 split—a certain recipe for gridlocks.

A government with a broad base in both the House and the Senate is a good start for launching a legislative agenda and in inspiring business confidence. A government with control of the legislature and the legislative agenda can inspire business confidence because policy and direction are predictable and consistent. Business confidence is easier to inspire in a government that is perceived to be competent and with an experience in economic management.

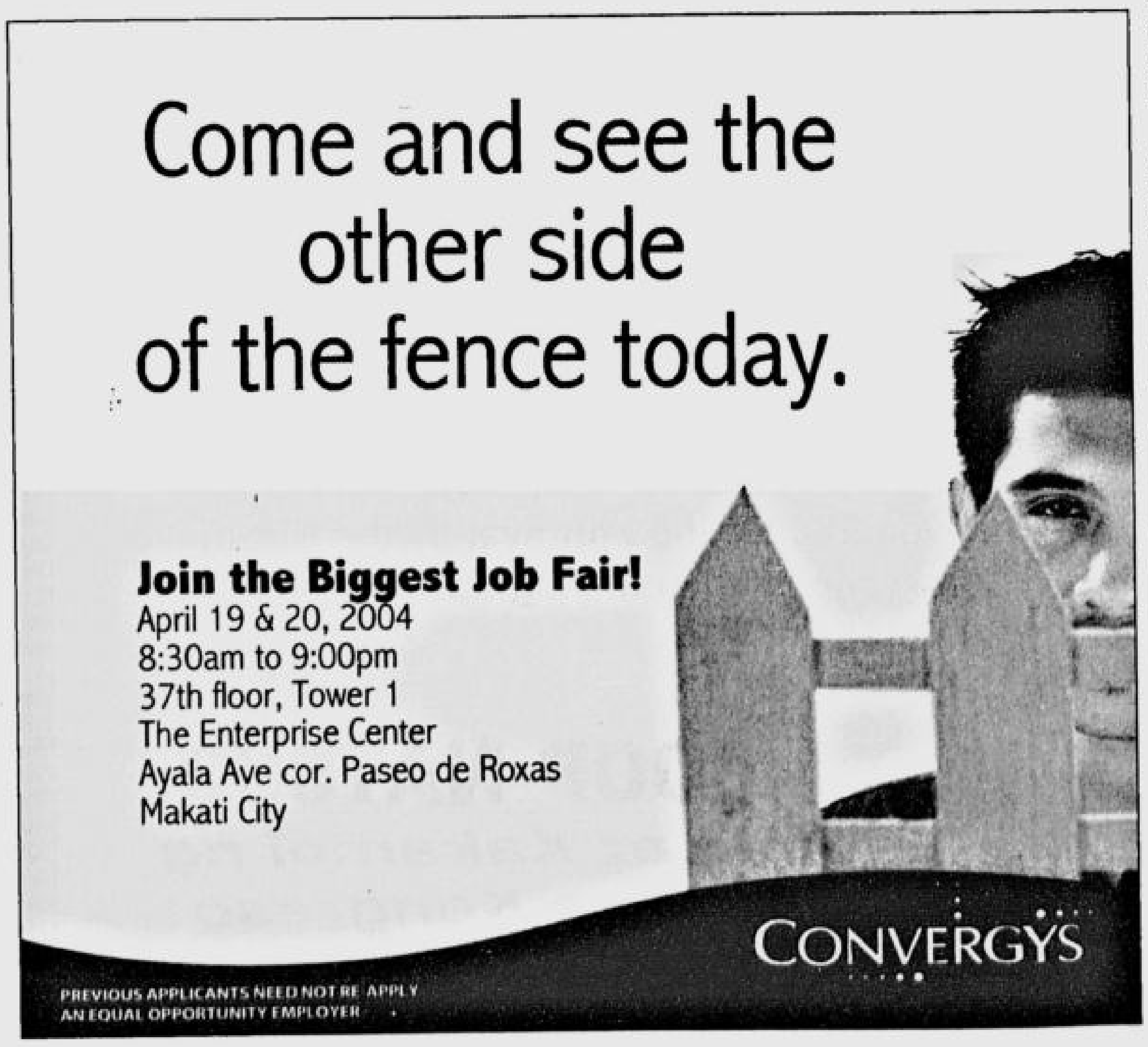
Local level

The immediate aim of the government in this last lap of the campaign is not only to consolidate the gains already made by the President. While the administration appears to hold the advantage now, it should shift focus on the local level to get a majority in both houses of Congress.

It is short-sighted to concentrate on making the administration presidential candidate. The new drive is to get out of the crippled government syndrome and to elect a government that can govern on its own strength without being hampered by entering into fragile coalitions of a hung Senate.

In terms of political infrastructure, this goal is possible. Statistics at the Commission on Elections show that the Lakas-Christian-Muslim Democratic coalition has more than 90-percent coverage in all electoral districts. Where the stakes concern getting a working majority in Congress, a political machine that covers nearly all the districts is a distinct edge.

We are facing in May 10 not just electing a new president. We should consider that we are also electing a government that can govern effectively. This last stage of the campaign should target that segment of wavering voters. The party that has the organization to cover the entire range of electorate can win an election that can avert another crippled presidency.



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Roco leave: Anong epekto sa eleksyon?

Maliwanag ang survey, kung ilan sa mga botante ni Roco ang lilipat kay FPJ o Ping or Brother Eddie. Pero paano kung hindi maliwanag ang sitwasyon? Naka-leave si Roco, but tuloy pa rin ang kandidatura? Ang sagot nina political strategist Reli German, analyst Tony Gatmaitan, Roco campaign manager Jaime Galvez Tan, at INQUIRER columnist Manuel Quezon III. Mamayang alas-10 ng gabi, sa InqTV on ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

ABC

SUERTRES 8 4 3
(In exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 10 14 25 26 40 49

'Magnifico,' Manalo, Mina top Famas

By Marinel R. Cruz

"MAGNIFICO," a film about a young boy whose kindness and innocence survive the harshness of human nature and poverty, scored another victory for independent film production outfit Violet Films when it won the highly coveted best picture award in last Saturday's 52nd Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences awards ceremony.

"Magnifico" director, Maryo J. de los Reyes, bagged another best director plum last Saturday at the Henry Lee Irwin Auditorium of the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City. Last February, De los Reyes received his Crystal Bear trophy for winning the Grand Prix for Best Feature Film at the 27th Kinderfilmfest of the Berlin Film Festival.

In Saturday's feat, De los Reyes won against four equally worthy nominees: Marilou Diaz-Abaya ("Noon at Ngayon"), Gil Portes ("Homecoming"), Joel Lamangan ("Filipinas") and Mark Meily ("Crying Ladies").

FULGAR and Manio. PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

ROMERO

But while the Philippine Movie Press Club in March handed "Magnifico" lead star Jiro Manio his first best actor trophy, the Famas award giving body deemed that he win in the best child actor category.

Manio, 9, became the youngest artist in Philippine movie history to win as best actor for his role as the poor but good-hearted boy Magnifico.

Kristel Aina Fulgar collected the best child actress trophy for the fantasy-thriller flick "Malikmata."

Last Saturday, it was dramatic actor Jay Manalo who won the best actor plum for his work in Jun Posadas' "Bayaran." Manalo portrays the role of killer, deaf-mute lover of Maricar de Mesa in "Bayaran."

The controversial best actress award, which then 18-year-old bold starlet Aleck Bovic won for "Tampisaw" last year, is now bestowed upon yet another young actress, Ara Mina, 24, for Joel Lamangan's "Huling Birhen sa Lupa."

The sexy star won for her role as Lorena, a woman forced to sell her body to earn money for her sickly mother.

Ara Mina snatched the throne from veteran actresses Lorna Tolentino ("Magnifico"), Sharon Cuneta ("Crying Ladies") and Maricel Soriano ("Filipinas"), as well as comedian Ai-Ai de las Alas ("Ang Tanging Ina").

Celia Rodriguez beat the more popular pick, Hilda Koronel ("Crying Ladies"), for the best supporting actress trophy, for her role as the cantankerous *Ka* Doring in "Magnifico."

Veteran actor Eddie Garcia is this year's Hall of Fame awardee. The honor was bestowed upon him after winning his fifth best actor trophy last year for the movie "Bahid."

Gloria Romero is this year's lifetime achievement awardee, while Susan Roces, the Huwarang Bituin ng Famas awardee.

Michiko Yamamoto was not around to accept her best story award for "Magnifico" and Roy Iglesias, his best screenplay trophy for "Filipinas."

Only Jesse Lucas ("Filipinas") went up the stage to accept his best music award. Presenter Tirso Cruz III accepted the best song trophy ("Kung Ako na lang Sana") in behalf of Soc Villanueva.

Joel Lamangan's "Filipinas," earned for Marya Ignacio and Ramon Reyes awards for best editing and best sound, respectively. Optima Digital won in the best visual effects category, also for "Filipinas."

Isagani Sioson is this year's best cinematographer for "Virgin People," while the late Tatus Aldana is best art director for "Ang Huling Birhen sa Lupa." Aldana died of a heart attack last February.

Rene Abadesa's work in the fantasy period movie "Babae sa Breakwater" won best in special effects.

Comedian and film director Enrique "Tintoy" Arcega is this year's recipient of the Lou Salvador Sr. Memorial award, while singer-songwriter Jose Mari Chan is Famas Golden artist awardee.

TV host Boy Abunda is the Dr. Jose Perez Memorial award recipient, while former First Lady Imelda Marcos, wife of the late President Ferdinand Marcos, was guest of honor and presidential awardee.

Teen stars Richard Gutierrez and Heart Evangelista are this year's German Moreno youth achievement awardees. Former Famas president Antonio I. Robles is the Atty. Flavio Macaso Memorial award recipient.

Comelec toothless, says officer

By Tarra Quismundo

LAST Tuesday, three young supporters of Rep. Joey Hizon (Manila, 5th District) complained to the police that they were manhandled by supporters of Kim Atienza. Both are running for Congress.

The incident was triggered by a confrontation over campaign materials which both sides had posted along the Estero de Paco.

Both camps have vowed to pursue the case in court.

Triggers for violence

Authorities have warned that the elections could become violent because of rivalries between the candidates' supporters.

However, as the incident in Paco, Manila, has shown, the run-up to the polls could be more violent because the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is not able to enforce simple elections rules. In this case, it is the posting of campaign materials only in designated common poster areas, which is embodied in the Fair Elections Act.

The law seems to lack teeth, said Roman Rosello, Manila District 1 Comelec election officer.

"Never has there been a candidate disqualified. That's why they (candidates) think the law can just be ignored," Rosello added.

But candidates are not the only ones apparently ignoring the law. Comelec officers themselves appear to have become fatalistic about it.

In Manila, election officers have limited themselves to removing illegally posted materials.

Operation 'Baklas'

Since the start of the campaign for local posts last March 25, Comelec officers have launched two to three "baklas" (poster removal) operations.

And every time they did, the illegally posted materials simply just made a comeback.

So, some people ask, "Why not go after the ones putting up posters outside the designated areas?"

According to Rosello, the local Comelec officers are so buried in other election related activities and paperwork that they could not attend to prosecuting offenders.

"We cannot really give much time to posters. You know the law is more often violated than followed," said District 6 Election Officer Francis Rosal.

Other tasks

Apart from enforcing election laws, local Comelec offices are tasked, among others, to prepare the book of voters and its duplicates to be posted on voting precincts, and the appointment of members of the board of election canvassers and election inspectors.

Funding is also a problem.

Rosello revealed that in the past "baklas" operations, each district was given P2,000 only for the food and transportation of at least 14 people tasked to tear away posters, pull down streamers, and wash off propaganda placed outside the common poster areas.

On top of that are the problems of mobility, manpower shortage and logistics, which have prevented them from even monitoring the extent of the poster violations in Manila and where it is most rampant.

Asked what could be done to solve the problem of enforcement, Rosello said a separate body within the Comelec should be created to monitor candidates' violations against the Fair Elections Act.

Violence imminent

"There should be a task force that would undertake monitoring and prosecution of violators," said Rosello.

He said that this task force could more effectively implement campaign regulations, as this would be their sole function.

Without proper enforcement of fair elections rules, some Comelec officers conceded that violent incidents similar to that involving the supporters of Hizon and Atienza could become imminent.

But still all of them hopd that the candidates would be able to reign in their supporters.

MMDA warns against fake commemorative plates

By Margaux Ortiz

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority officials yesterday warned motorists against buying commemorative plates bearing the agency's anniversary celebration last November.

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said some businessmen were asking for P3,000 in exchange for the MMDA plates.

"We are not issuing such plates," Vergel de Dios pointed out.

Vergel de Dios said vehicles bearing commemorative plates, even ones approved by the Land Transportation Office, were not exempted from the number coding scheme.

He also warned motorists against buying exemption certificates outside of the MMDA office.

He said the vehicles of motorists with fake exemption certificates will be impounded and the motorist charged with falsification of public documents.

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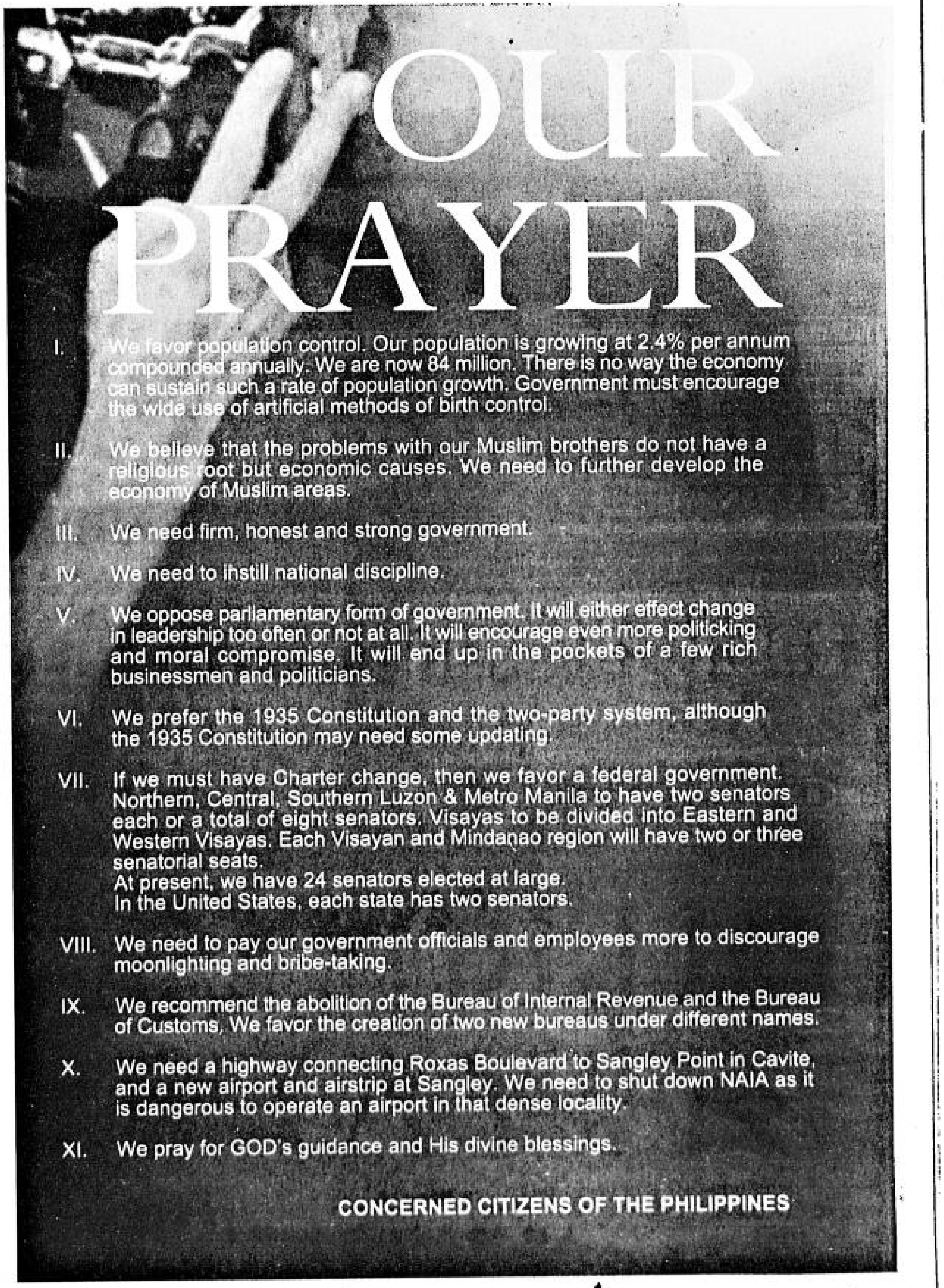

OUR PRAYER

I. We favor population control. Our population is growing at 2.4% per annum compounded annually. We are now 84 million. There is no way the economy can sustain such a rate of population growth. Government must encourage the wide use of artificial methods of birth control.

II. We believe that the problems with our Muslim brothers do not have a religious root but economic causes. We need to further develop the economy of Muslim areas.

III. We need firm, honest and strong government.

IV. We need to ihstill national discipline.

V. We oppose parliamentary form of government. It will either effect change in leadership too often or not at all. It will encourage even more politicking and moral compromise. It will end up in the pockets of a few rich businessmen and politicians.

VI. We prefer the 1935 Constitution and the two-party system, although the 1935 Constitution may need some updating.

VII. If we must have Charter change, then we favor a federal government. Northern, Central, Southern Luzon & Metro Manila to have two senators each or a total of eight senators. Visayas to be divided into Eastern and Western Visayas. Each Visayan and Mindanao region will have two or three senatorial seats.
At present, we have 24 senators elected at large.
In the United States, each state has two senators.

VIII. We need to pay our government officials and employees more to discourage moonlighting and bribe-taking.

IX. We recommend the abolition of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs. We favor the creation of two new bureaus under different names.

X. We need a highway connecting Roxas Boulevard to Sangley Point in Cavite, and a new airport and airstrip at Sangley. We need to shut down NAIA as it is dangerous to operate an airport in that dense locality.

XI. We pray for GOD's guidance and His divine blessings.

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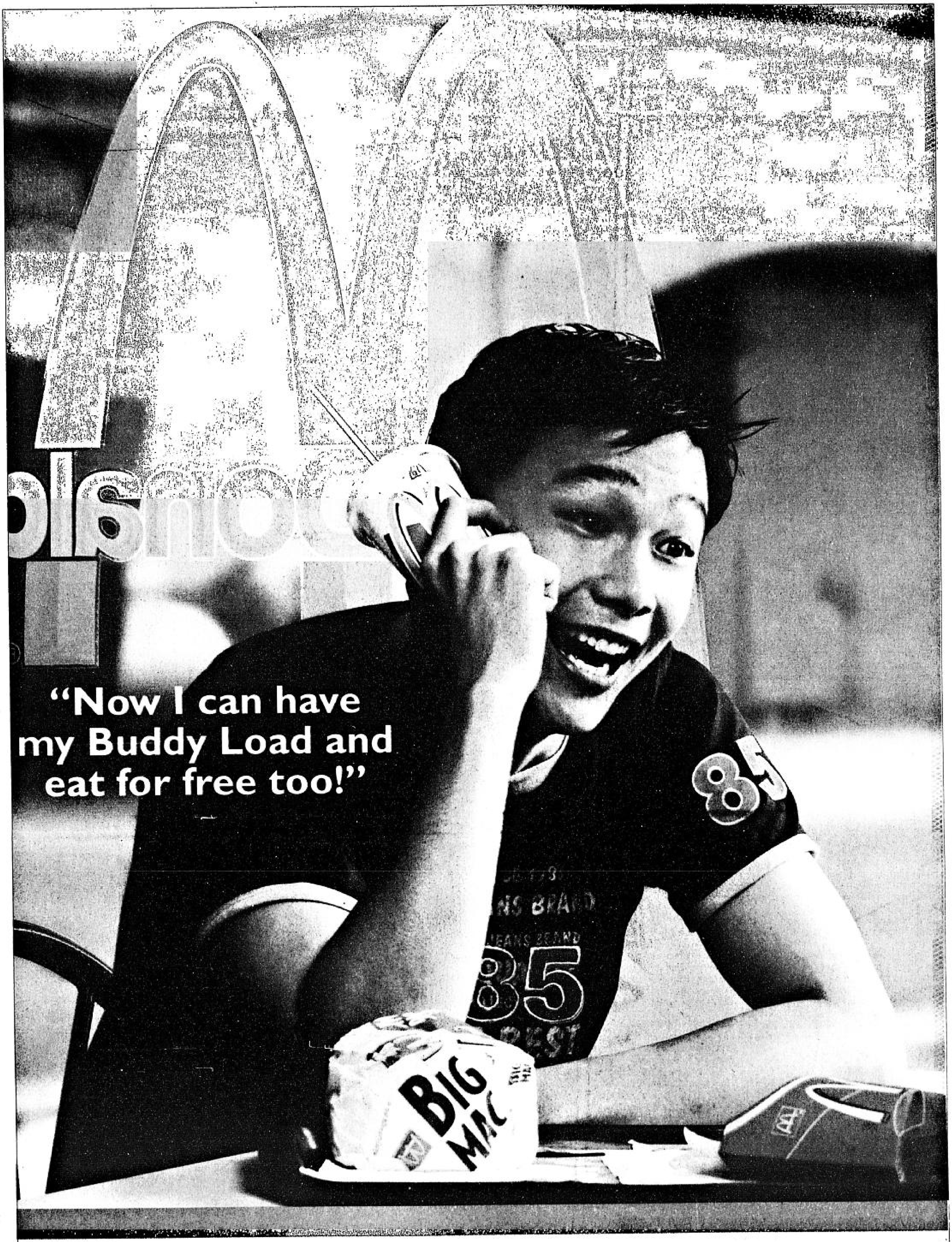
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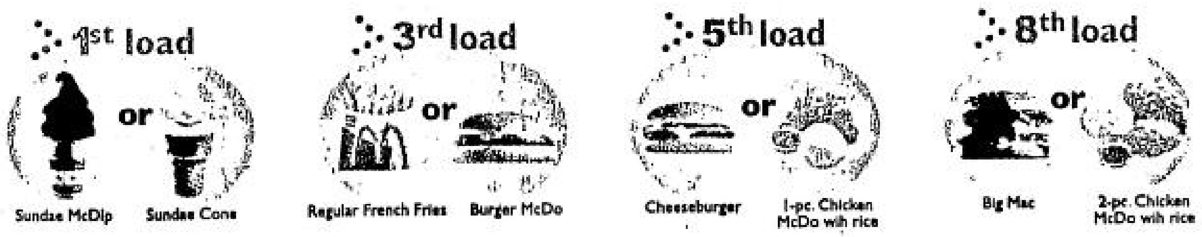
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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games-Knicks vs Nets, Game 3, 1994 Eastern First Round; 7 a.m.; Solar Sports—Hometown New Jersey outplays its neighbors, New York, to win the contest by one point in the extra period.

2004 NBA Playoffs-Nuggets vs Timberwolves; 9:30 a.m. (r-10 p.m.), Game 1; Western First Round; Solar Sports; Mavs vs Kings; Game 1; Western First Round; 8 p.m.; IBC 13—Led by rookie sensation Carmelo Anthony, Denver makes its first playoff appearance since 1995 against Minnesota

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

TOUR PILIPINAS

Feliciano tops 4th lap, takes yellow jersey

By Marc Anthony Reyes

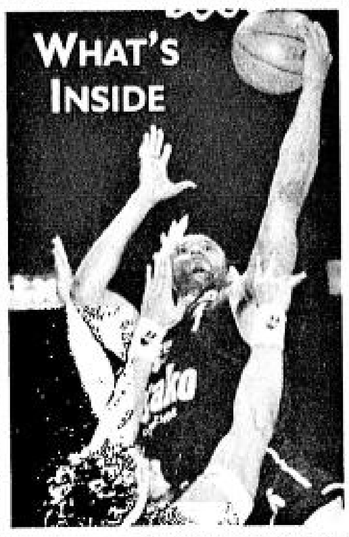
TAGAYTAY CITY—He captured the fourth stage by technicality but took the yellow jersey with certainty.

Frederick Feliciano, already the winner of Saturday's third stage, yesterday ruled the 157-km fourth leg in a dramatic sprint finish with Sherwin Diamsay, who was later stripped of top stage honors for crossing the path of another cyclist.

Feliciano, the 26-year-old national team mainstay riding for Patrol 117, thus became the Tour's first back-to-back stage winner following his victory in the Daet-Lucena leg overnight.

The bashful, scar-faced campaigner from Aliaga, Nueva Ecija moved up from fifth place to the

FELICIANO/ A26



WHAT'S INSIDE

- Lakers, 3 others triumph /A30
- Bata on target for 3rd title /A26
- Red Bull survives TNT blitz /A27

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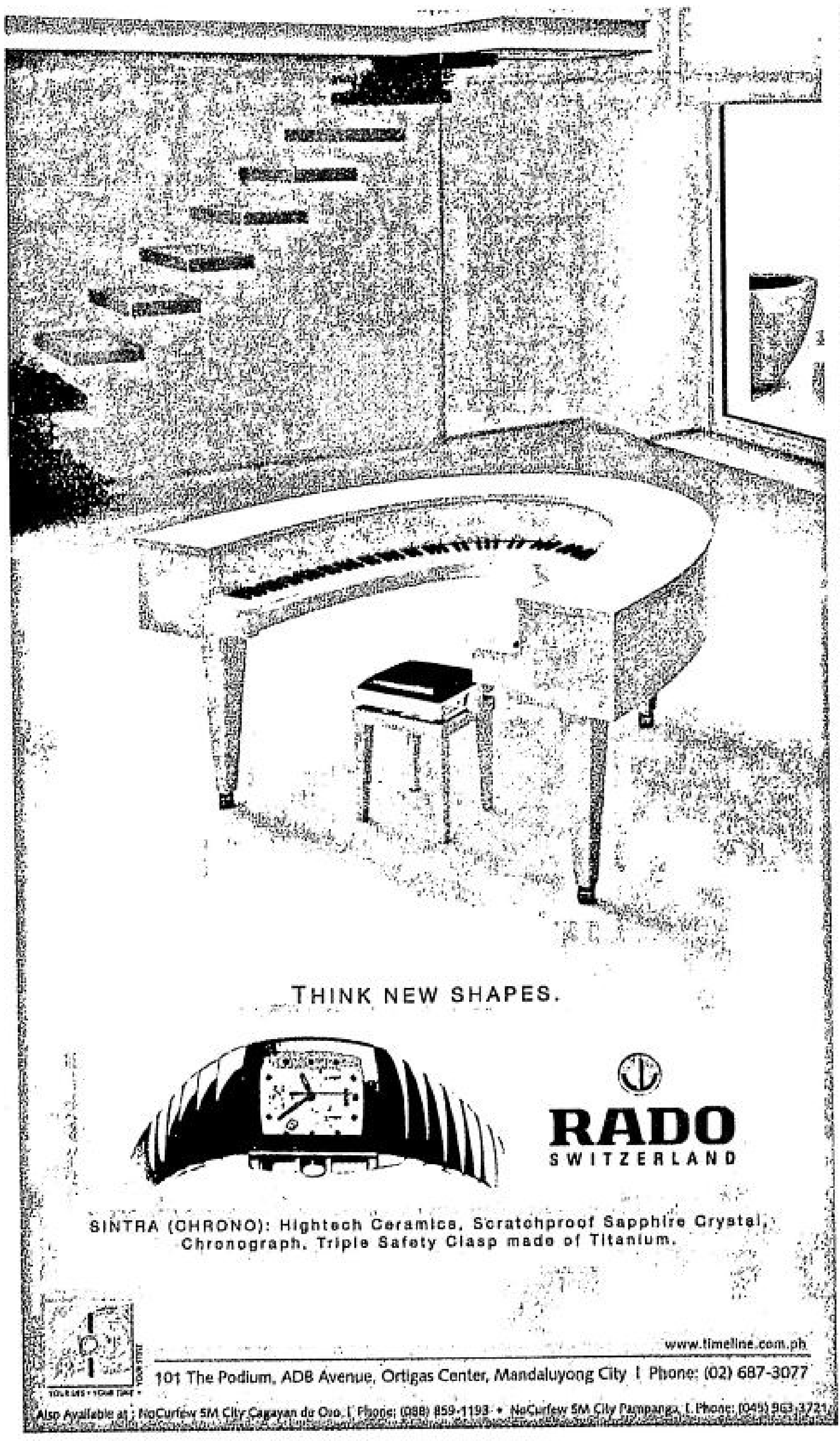

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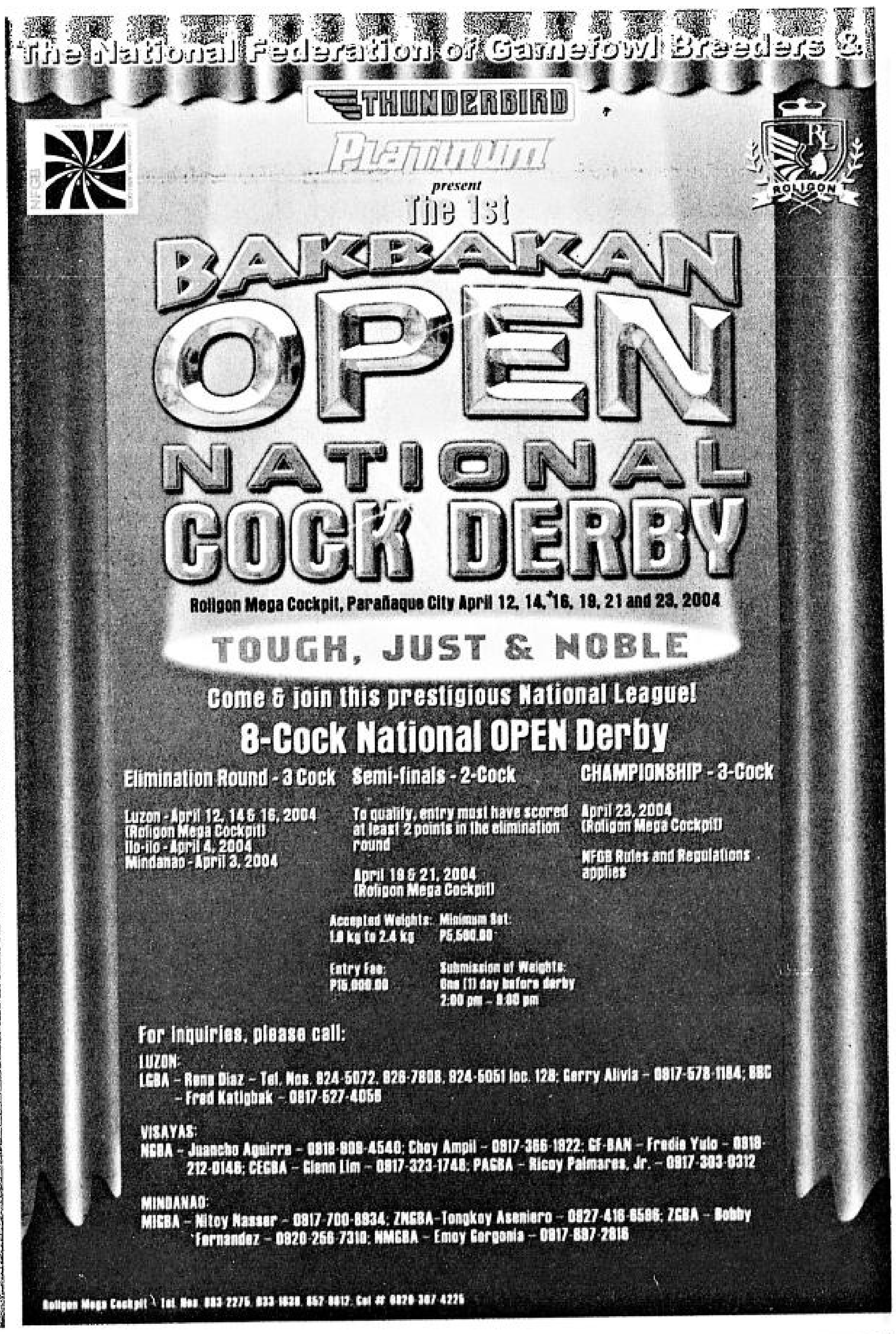

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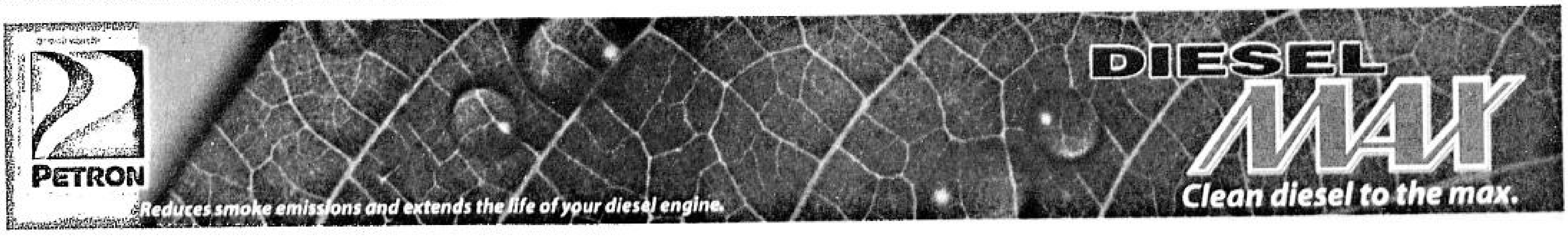

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5:16 mins.	5:09 mins.	4:55 mins.	4:23 mins.	4:10 mins.	3:32 mins.	3:11 mins.	2:30 mins.	7 secs. behind	14:47:33

AIR 21 STUDIO 23 DZMM RADYO PATROL SAIS TRENTA FedEx Mail More TANDUAY Beer Na Beer PLDT SAMSUNG PUREFOODS Dole Marsman Drysdale Medical Products Inc. METRO DRUG, INC PATROL 117 DILG VAT RIDERS 2004 TOUR AIR 21

Feliciano tops 4th lap, takes yellow jersey

From page A25

top of the overall standings, a mere seven seconds in front of erstwhile leader Eboy Quinones, who finished yesterday's stage in 21st place, two minutes 44 seconds off the pace.

Feliciano also seized the King of the Mountain Award for the stage that wound up in this mountain-top city.

Feliciano actually crossed the payoff line second only to PLDT's Diamsay, whose swashbuckling windup in the final 50 meters saw him finish a bike-length ahead of the four-man lead pack.

Diamsay, a 26-year-old rice farmer from Pura, Tarlac, was already being interviewed at the reporters' tent when the chief commissaire's ruling was released.

According to Tour rule No. 8, a cyclist cannot "deviate from a selected lane, endangering other riders during sprint."

Diamsay's teammate Rhyan Tanguilig and the Postmen's Lloyd Reynante towed the field going to the final 100 meters when Feliciano made his own bid to snatch the stage win from behind.

"When I passed Rhyan and Lloyd, I heard a commotion," said Feliciano in Filipino. "But I didn't pay attention to it."

The uproar was caused by the rampaging Diamsay, who swerved across Reynante's path and hit his handlebar. Reynante avoided crashing.

That mischief didn't escape the eye of chief commissaire Renato del Mundo, who rode in a vehicle behind the leading cyclists.

As penalty for the violation, Diamsay, PLDT's assistant skipper, was relegated to the last place of his pack and assessed a 30-second penalty in the overall standing plus a P1,000 fine.

Second stage winner Merculio Ramos jumped to third place overall—two minutes, 30 seconds behind Feliciano—after finishing 29 seconds off the lead pack in seventh place. Tanguilig is in fourth (3:11 off) and Albert Primero of Dole, fifth (3:32).

Rounding out the top 10 are Postman Enrique Domingo at sixth, Samsung's Ericson Obosa seventh, first stage winner Felix Celeste (Vat Riders) eighth, two-time champion Renato Dolosa (Metro Drug) ninth, and teammate Alvin Benosa.

The original five-man lead group, which included stage second-placer Darwin Maraña of Marsman-Drysdale, peeled off from the main peloton 15 km from the start in Lucena City.

Alternating at the pace, the lead pack held on entering Batangas. Then in the town of Tuy, PLDT captain Tanguilig asked for his assistant's help so he could win the stage. But Diamsay, by then thirsty and hungry for glory, turned him down.

"I really want to win a stage," said Diamsay in Filipino, "so I tried hard to stick with the lead pack. I didn't want to waste that opportunity."

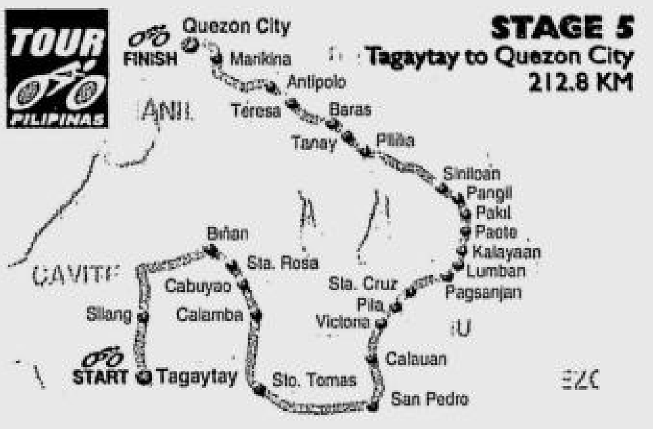
Tanguilig eventually finished fifth in the stage.

A seven-man second group, which included the flu-stricken defending champion Arnel Quirimit, followed them home in the stage which saw the cyclists round the scenic Taal Lake clockwise along the sun-baked national road.

Quirimit eventually faltered by the time the chasing pack reached Calaca, Batangas and was soon swallowed by the third pack.

It wasn't only Quirimit who struggled in the intense heat as the main peloton slowed down from speeds as fast as 60 kph in a stretch between Candelaria and Tiaong to 20 kph along the rolling highways of Nasugbu.

UNWORTHY VICTOR: Diamsay crosses the line ahead of Feliciano (112), Maraña and Reynante. The Tour chief commissaire later stripped Diamsay of stage honors. ROMY HOMILLADA



STAGE 4 RESULTS

1. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) 4 hours 14 seconds; 2. D. Marana (Marsman Drysdale), 3. L. Reynante (Postmen), 4. S. Diamsay (PLDT), same time;

5. R. Tanguilig (PLDT), 7 secs. behind;

6. A. Primero (Dole), 29 secs. behind; 7. M. Ramos (Samsung), same time;

8. J. Millanes (Postmen), 2 mins. 12 secs. behind;

9. E. Domingo (Postmen), 2 mins. 14 secs. behind; 10. O. Fronda, (Mall and More) same time; 11. W. Davadilla (Purefoods), same time; 12. E. Obosa (Samsung), same time; 13. V. Espiritu, (Beer Na Beer), same time; 14. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug), same time; 15. D. Ganigan (VAT Riders), same time;

16. C. Felix (VAT Riders) 2 mins. 33 secs. behind;

17. L. Atilano (Mail and More), 2 mins. 38 secs. behind; 18. J. Tolentino (Dole), same time;

19. R. Navarro (Tanduay), 2 mins. 41 secs. behind;

20. P. Manapul (Marsman Drysdale), 2 mins. 44 secs. behind

Overall individual

11. P. Manapul (Marsman Drysdale), 5 mins. 54 secs. behind;

12. T. Martinez (Beer Na Beer), 5 mins. 59 secs. behind;

13. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug), 6 mins. 18 secs. behind;

14. A. Marcelo (Mall and More), 7 mins. 21 secs. behind;

15. R. Navarro (Tanduay), 7 mins. 27 secs. behind;

16. D. Ganigan (VAT Riders), 7 mins. 50 secs. behind:

17. S. Barnachea (Mall and More), 8 mins. 14 secs.

18. C. Jazul (Beer Na Beer), 9 mins. and 33 secs.

19. V. Baluyot (Samsung), 9 mins. 35 secs.

Team standings

1. POSTMEN 44 hours, 31 minutes, 32.589 seconds;
2. PLDT, 6 mins. 46.279 secs. behind
3. SAMSUNG, 7:36.906 mins behind
4. METRO DRUG, 7:50.624.
5. PUREFOODS, 7:56.197
6. PATROL 117, 8:1.949
7. DOLE, 11:7.215
8. BEER NA BEER, 11:53.679
9. MARSMAN DRYSDALE, 11:58.499
10. VAT RIDERS, 16:3.182
11. MAIL AND MORE, 17:17.480
12. TANDUAY RIDERS, 21:58.174

Quirimit's gang still optimistic

TAGAYTAY CITY—Even with defending champion Arnel Quirimit already conceding defeat just three laps into the Air21 2004 Tour Pilipinas, Team Tanduay Rhum remains upbeat about its chances in the team competition.

"You can't win them all," said Larry Li, Tanduay's advertising manager, who shepherds the team through the entire 2,758.69 km journey from Sorsogon to Manila. "Our top rider (Quirimit) has abandoned hopes of individual glory. His sights are now set on helping the team.

"The team is determined. Arnel's condition is improving and we expect the team to make its move in the next couple of laps."

The recent setback notwithstanding, Li reaffirmed the company's support, making sure that logistics are made available to the Rhum Riders in their quest to improve on their fourth place finish last year.

The Rhum Riders are lagging behind in the team standings after Quirimit, downed by the flu, checked in 73rd in the Tour's first true test Friday, a 207.1-km trek from Daet, Camarines Norte to Lucena City.

Bata on target for 3rd title

HONG KONG—Efren "Bata" Reyes remained on course for a third straight crown yesterday as he held off Japan's Satoshi Kawabata, 9-6, to advance to the semifinal round of the San Miguel Asian 9-ball Tour leg here at the Hong Kong Football Club's sports hall.

But while Reyes sustained his amazing match streak in the series, now at 13 wins counting his sweep of the first two legs in Singapore and Vietnam and his victories in the first two rounds of this weekend's event, compatriot Francisco "Django" Bustamante continued to struggle.

Bustamante bowed to Taiwan's Hsia Hui-kai, 9-7, late Saturday night in their own quarterfinal duel in the circuit sponsored by San Miguel Beer and organized by ESPN Star Sports Management Group.

The Filipino actually looked headed for a semifinal stint after building a 4-0 lead in the race-to-9 duel with Hsia.

But bad breaks in his succeeding turns stalled the charge of the top seeded player here and Hsia pounced with remarkable resolve to win and arrange an all-Taiwanese semis clash in the upper bracket with Chao Fong Pang.

Two-time world pool champion Chao downed Patrick Ooi of Malaysia, 9-5.

Reyes, the last man standing among the four crack Puyat Sports-sponsored players, lived up to his billing as the player to beat although he had to go through some anxious moments before disposing of the 34-year-old, left-handed Kawabata.

"*Mahirap pa rin manalo dahil lahat naman iyan may mga tira* (Winning's difficult because they all have their own style)," said Reyes, who was quickly whisked away by a large Filipino group who had prepared a grand lunch for the Team Puyat Sports which also includes Antonio Gabica and Warren Kiamco.

Reyes, ranked No. 2 here, tries to foil the Taiwanese juggernaut as he guns for the finals berth against No. 3 Yang Ching Shun, who routed Korea's Park Shin Young, 9-0.

But Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, long-time patron of Reyes and company, remains hopeful of his ward's chances, hinting experience and talent will prevail in the end.

Cashing in on Kawabata's scratch shot in the first rack, Reyes took the first two frames and then built a 5-3 lead.

Meanwhile, Star Sports will telecast the event on May 1 starting with the quarterfinals at 3:30 p.m. while the semifinal matches and the championship will be aired on May 2 starting at 2 p.m.

Pinoy coaches make anti-US statement

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

SHELL did not actually say Americans are good-for-nothing bums.

No. But the Shell team has just made the strongest statement in the PBA.

It's indeed too early to say how far Shell would go after it junked an American coach and took in Leo Austria, Pinoy as Pinoy can be, as new team mentor.

The Turbo Chargers, with Austria on board, may finally stop being the favorite whipping boys in the pro league.

Who knows? Shell, after admitting its own mistake, could also become a rare rags-to-riches story.

The coaching correction has been reaping dividends.

But more than threaten to be named the most improved team in the PBA, Shell deserves both applause and handshake for showing the way for other squads who have yet to be cured of colonial mentality.

***

By firing John Moran and successfully gambling on Austria, Shell could've started a revolution in the PBA.

Shell has just made it clear that Filipino coaches could be as good, or even better, than American mentors.

At least, other squads would now look around, scour the local coaching market place where, as had been shown by the Austria example, happy bargains abound.

No need to inquire if Austria is getting half as much as what had been paid John Moran.

The truth is, more than the turnaround in fortunes, more than having saved on dollars, Shell need not pay for extra electricity because Austria is not about to do a Moran and call for midnight workouts.

***

The greater thing hereabouts is that Austria, good and talented, is no rarity.

Look, if they bother to shift focus on the Philippine Basketball League, coaching scouts would be happily amazed with the latest ambuscades being staged by a Toyota-Otis, a league first-timer.

In its PBL debut, Toyota-Otis, manned mainly by members of the NCAA champ Letran Knights, had appeared totally lost.

In the first half of its inaugural game against Viva, it got mangled raw and was all but blown out of the court.

To make the long story short, Toyota-Otis struck back in the second half to officially win acceptance into the PBL fold.

It lost its next game against powerhouse Welcoat, but Toyota-Otis again went down fighting.

***

Listen. After those close matches, Toyota-Otis, a laughing stock the first time it stepped on the PBL turf, has gone on to score back-to-back wins, first against Blu Star and next over the fancied Sunkist squad.

The heartwarming thing here is that Toyota-Otis, although it may not make it to the finals, is a well-motivated, sharply coached squad that's bound to score more exciting reversals.

Credit goes to coach Louie Alas, who had told his players inside the dugout in that debut against Viva they had no business going out to resume playing.

Why? Because Alas had been more than convinced his jittery charges were all playing scared.

They had been dared to play like mature, credible cagers, not like choirboys begging to be led into the rites of manhood.

Of course, other than timely motivation, debuting Toyota-Otis has gained respect because of sound, expert coaching.

***

Going back to the PBA, members of the Shell squad, together with the coaching assistants, should also be commended for the resurgence of the former cellar-dwellers.

Coach Austria has indeed helped open doors to great expectations.

Which, unfortunately, cannot be said of coach Siot Tanquingcen who continues to agonize after being left to handle a Ginebra team that's rich in big names but which has yet to learn what solid, man-sized team defense is all about.

You can bet each Ginebra loss is a tear-jerker to its countless fans.

While Austria could have been tapped to essay a rare rags-to-riches story for Shell, Tanquingcen's could only rue his fate.

It was not unlike having inherited a mansion that doesn't have lines for running water and electricity.

The sadder thing is that as the bloated lineup appears to thrive more on soap opera, Tanquingcen, through no fault of his own, is in danger of losing for Barangay Ginebra that fabulous darling-of-the-crowd tag.

That, indeed, would be the biggest tear-jerker.

APRIL 3 & 4 QUALIFYING ROUND
QUARTER FINALS
SEMI-FINALS

CLUB champions celebrate their victories. From left, Uyliapco, Tad-y, Bautista, Oh, Dizon and Onella.

Bautista pulls off big win in Eagle Ridge tourney

ARNALDO Bautista's beauty of a birdie putt from 30 feet on the 36th and final hole for the Class B title over Raphael Juan capped a drama-filled weekend of the first Eagle Ridge club championships at the Faldo course in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

That downhill birdie gave Bautista a 2-up win and denied Juan, who set himself up for an easy par from the fringe.

In the all-Korean duel for the Class A plum, sixth-seed Oh Kwang-taek beat the heavily favored top seed Choi Jae-hoon. Oh trailed by four after the morning's first 18 holes but dominated the afternoon portion of the showdown to post a 3 and 2 victory.

Sharing the honor with Bautista and Oh as Eagle Ridge's first batch of club champions were Deogracia Tad-y in Class C, Tommy Uyliapco in Class D, Vicente Onella in the seniors division and Arlette Dizon in the ladies division.

No. 2 Dizon became the highest seed to make it to the top, upending No. 5 Marthy del Rosario, 8 and 7, in the shortest match of the day.

All the other matches didn't last longer than 31 holes, with No. 3 Tad-y routing the top-ranked Benito Cheng, 8 and 6; No. 3 Uyliapco making mincemeat of No. 4 Edwin Celino and No. 5 Onella showing no mercy to second seed Sergio Lim, 7 and 6.

Dizon, Tad-y and Uyliapco all carried 6-up leads into the afternoon rounds while Onella was already 7 ahead when it began.

SWU pair keeps Nestea volley title

BORACAY—Southwestern University retained the women's title while University of San Jose Recoletos (USJR) regained the men's crown after a couple of thrilling championship matches in the Nestea Beach Volley 2004 in this charming island resort yesterday.

A big Sunday crowd packed the stands as Southwestern pulled off a 21-14, 21-13 victory over University of the Visayas (UV) before 2002 champ USJR pounded out a 21-15, 21-15 triumph over hard-fighting newcomer La Salle.

For their victories, Southwestern U's Florian Gutierrez and Marites Natad received P100,000, with P50,000 worth of sports equipment going to their school.

USJR's Michael Simbajon and Jonrey Sasing received the same amount.

Janez Igot and Joyce Nunez of UV as well as Janley Patrona and Hansel Go of La Salle received the P50,000 runner-up prize in the event sponsored by Mikasa, Speedo, SMART Buddy, Coppertone, Cebu Pacific, Ayala Center Cebu, Power Plant Mall, TGI Friday's and Le Soleil de Boracay.

Finishing third and bagging P25,000 in the women's side was 2002 champion Adamson University, which defeated University of Negros Occidental Recoletos, 21-9, 21-18.

Third best in the men's side was Foundation University which survived giant-killer Mindanao State U, 22-20, 21-18.

Despite some flashes of brilliance by their opponents, the Southwestern spikers were in control of the match. They raced to an 11-6 lead in the first set before wrapping up the set in less than 15 minutes.

"We're very very happy to keep the title," said Gutierrez, a shifty 20-year-old just like her partner. "We've played UV many times and so we've learned how to pounce on their weaknesses."

Red Bull survives TNT blitz

By Musong Castillo, *Contributor*

RED Bull Barako pulled out all the stops in the homestretch to outsteady Talk 'N Text, 106-104, last night for its second straight victory in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Thunder, saddled with a new import who was missing a beat or two, needed a strong fourth quarter to pull off the high-wire act after blowing a 20-point first half lead.

It was the sixth win in 10 games for the Thunder, whose Cory Hightower struggled all game.

Davonn Harp barely missed posting a triple double with 25 points, 19 rebounds and eight assists and held the Thunder together during the most game's critical moments.

Talk 'N Text overhauled a 14-34 deficit early in the second period, took a couple of two-point leads late in the third only to fall short in the face of a determined Red Bull stand and lose for the second time in five days and fifth in 11 games overall.

Jimwell Torion made a grand return from a five-month suspension, scattering 17 points in a 26-minute stint off the bench. His comeback was highlighted by short stab and three-pointer inside the final minute of the third period that restored order in the Thunder offense.

Enrico Villanueva and Mick Pennisi both made an impact as well, combining for 26 points, with Villanueva hauling down 10 rebounds.

The debuting Hightower accounted for only 12 points on 3-of-20 shooting from the field. His bright moment, though very short, came inside the final 1:30 when he split two trips to the charity stripe and gave the Thunder a breather.

Though the coaching staff didn't see a gem of a first game from Hightower, head coach Yeng Guiao remained optimistic that the National Basketball Association veteran will play better in the succeeding games. He described the American as "the right import for us."

"He's a smart player," Guiao said of Hightower, his fifth import for the tournament. "He can shoot the ball. I know he can. He just didn't make the shot tonight."

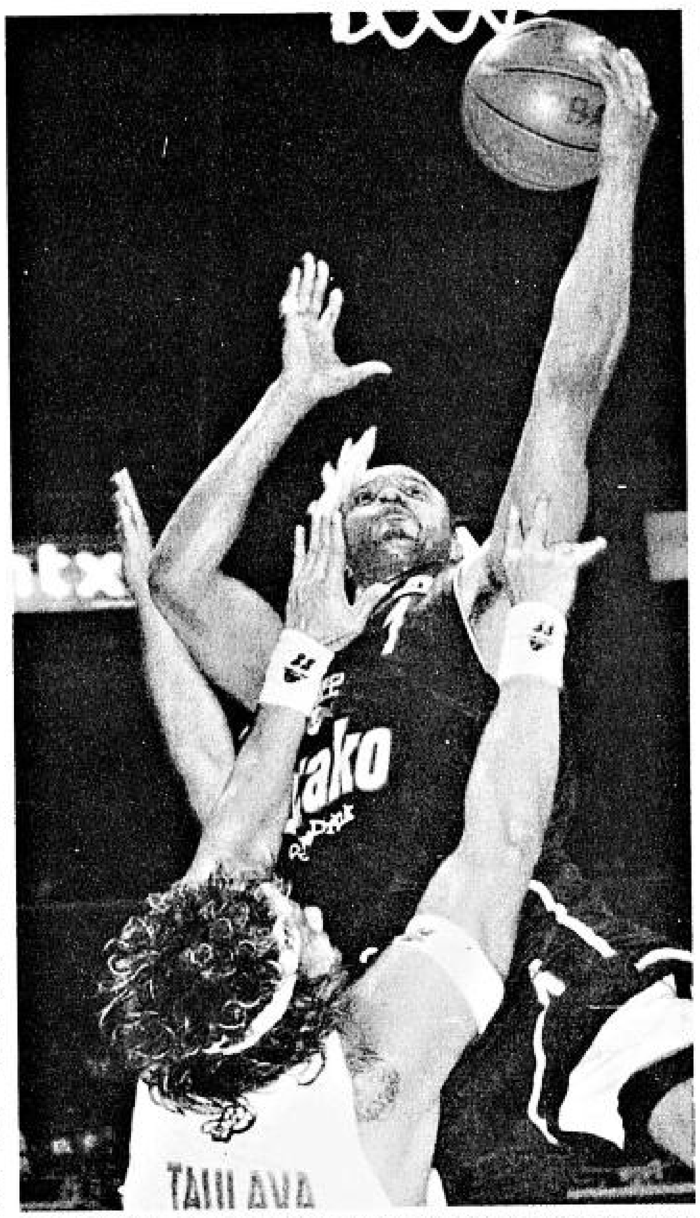
The scores:

RED BULL 106—Harp 25, Torion 17, Pennisi 14, Hightower 12, Baguio 12, Tugade 7, Valenzuela 5, Robinson 4, Se 2.

TALK 'N TEXT 104—Honeycutt 31, Alapag 26, Taulava 22, Miller 12, Pablo 9, Telan 2, Belano 2, Ravena 0, Fran 0.

Quarters: 27-14; 53-42; 80-76; 106-104.

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:45 p.m.—Purefoods vs Sta.Lucia
7:10 p.m.—Shell vs San Miguel


HIGHTOWER of Red Bull drives off Asi Taulava of Talk 'N Text early in the game, before the import lost his touch. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Asian fencing tilt starts

MORE than 400 fencers from 23 countries will display their wares in the 2004 Sharp Asian fencing championships and the Asia/Oceania Olympic qualifying competitions which unwrap at 9 a.m. today at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

Eight men's and women's slots in three individual events will be up for grabs in the Olympic qualifier today and tomorrow. Action in the Sharp Asian tourney organized by the Philippine Amateur Fencers Association and sponsored by Sharp Phil. Inc. kicks off on April 21.

Defending champion China heads the Asian cast. Among the fencers to watch are reigning world women's epee junior champion Tan Li and Asian titlist Zhang Lianglan.

Why toxic is a poll issue

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

STRESSING that it is not a "parochial" issue but a topic for discussion in the May 10 elections, American environmentalist Polly Parks has asked Filipino voters to demand from their presidential candidates to include in their respective platform the cleanup of toxic wastes left by the United States military soldiers in their former bases in Clark and Subic.

Allan Macatuno of the PDI Central Luzon Desk recently reported that Parks said in a letter to the People's Task force for Bases Cleanup (PTFBC) that Filipino victims of alleged toxic waste contamination in the former US bases in Pampanga and Zambales should not be afraid to ask a platform from the candidates to address their problems.

According to Parks, the presidents of both countries will undoubtedly meet again next year. "But whether it is (US presidential aspirant John) Kerry and (Philippine presidential candidate Fernando) Poe Jr. or (US President George W.) Bush and (Philippine President) Macapagal-Arroyo or any combination thereof, it is imperative that the (toxic waste) issue dominate their scripted talks."

Based in Washington DC, Parks stressed that the issue could very well be a factor in the coming US and Philippine elections. The issue could cost Bush and Ms Macapagal votes in their respective bids for the presidency, while the issue could garner support for aspirants Kerry and Poe and, if I may add, Raul Roco, Sen. Ping Lacson, Bro. Eddie Villanueva and Eddie Gil. "For voters, it means that if their candidates know about the issue, they will factor it into their voting."

For years, the toxic waste issue has been taken for granted by the Philippine government. As far as I know, there are only a few Filipino legislators who have taken up the cudgels for these toxic waste victims, among them environmentalists Sen. Loren Legarda, clean Water Act advocate Sen. Robert Jaworski and Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos.

In the past, former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada has raised the toxic waste problem with their US counterparts, but they failed to find a win-win solution. American officials claimed that the 1947 Philippine-US military bases agreement did not require environmental remedy. Still, it does not mean that the US government has no moral obligation to remove the toxic waste from their former bases. Methinks, the Americans should forget about this legal gobbledygook for the sake of a longtime ally.

"The Americans left this garbage in our country," lamented Herondina Valencia, mother of toxic waste victim Crizel Valencia who died two years ago at the age of 6. "Many have died and we want the Americans to know what happened to us."

Almost 200 people, many of whom are poor and innocent children, were reported to have died as a result of toxic contamination in these bases, particularly in Clark, the chief reason why I have been repeatedly opposing the plan to build a permanent, repeat, a permanent, sports complex there. I felt that in the long run the presence of toxic chemicals in Clark could be harmful to the athletes who will be quartered there during their training.

By the way, it is not only in Clark and Subic where toxic waste is a major concern. The danger of toxic contamination and pollution is nationwide, from the Pasig River, to Manila Bay, Marinduque, Palawan and even to as far north in Baguio City where a fish kill was reported—would you believe it—at Burnham Park's lagoon? Incidentally, why do some people and business firms continue to blatantly dispose of their solid waste and toxic chemicals in Philippine waters, particularly in the Pasig River and Manila Bay? Are they not concerned with the protection and conservation of their own environment? They should change their bad habit by adopting the proper waste disposal practices. In this "Month of the Environment," it's time for the government to implement a consistent rehabilitation program of polluted Philippine waterways so that these waters become fresh and clean again and a rich source of edible fish and other marine life.

JVC BADMINTON

Vivas, Rivera in hot start

PAUL Vivas and Roden Rivera overpowered their rivals Saturday to lead the advance of favorites in the first round of the boys' singles of the JVC Open Badminton 14-under Championships at the SM Megamall.

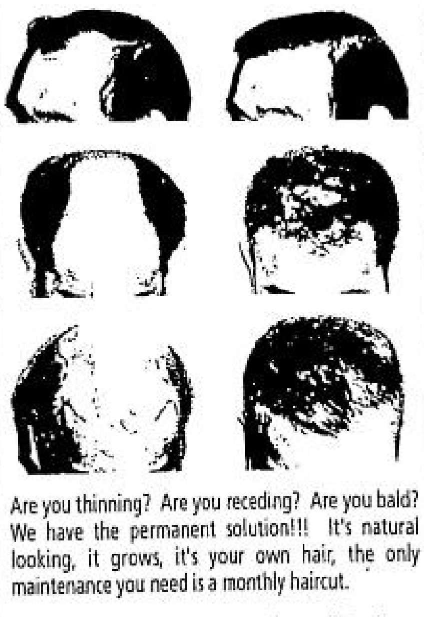
Vivas blanked Frank Ong, 15-0, 15-0, the same score posted by Rivera in thumping Manuel Gayao.

Also advancing to the next round were Gerard Certeza, Raymond Banez, Ramon Guerrero, Christopher Pilones, Rustum Caunga, Craig Lucas, Raymond Alonzo, Peter Magnaye, John Patriwirawan, Patrique Magnaye, Angelito Flores, Jed Perez, Peter Tuliao and Randolph Balatbat.

The results: Certeza d. Edgar de Jesus, 15-0; Banez d. John Pasicolan, 15-4, 15-11; Guererro d. Yrjo Galvez, 15-3, 15-7; Pilones d. Raphael Regero, 15-1, 15-1; Caunga d. Christian Labaquis, 15-0, 15-2; Lucas d. Joseph Paredes, 15-8, 15-5; Peter Magnaye d. Raphael Hidalgo, 15-6, 15-11; Alonzo d. James Javier, 15-1, 15-1; Patriwirawan d. Timothy Garcia, 15-1, 15-7; Patrique Magnaye d. Bryon Trambulo, 15-0, 15-2; Flores d. Kyle Vinarao, 15-9, 15-9; Perez d. Miguel Balasbas, 15-6, 15-5; Tuliao d. Jed Pantanila, 15-4, 15-1; Balatbat d. Don Agustin, 15-3, 15-3.

JVC Philippines chair Faustino Salud (left) and Philippine Badminton Association VP Deputy Director General Edgardo Aglipay do the ceremonial serves opening the tournament with (starting third from left) JVC GM Kazue Salud, Tourism executive director Cynthia Carrion, POC's Steve Hontiveros, JVC's Dennis Salud and actor Ricky Davao.

BEFORE AFTER



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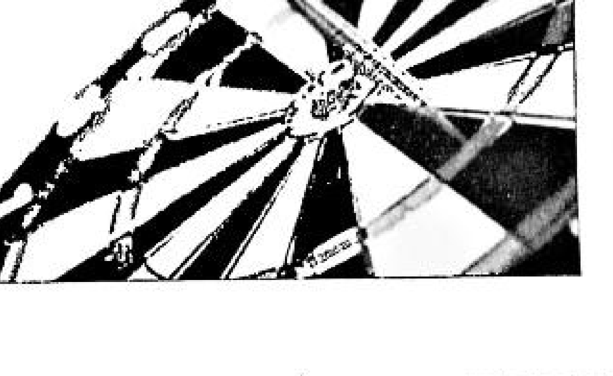

Beach volley at CSC

CANTADA Sports Center is organizing an all-year-round beach volleyball schedule of tournaments at its newly constructed beach volleyball court in Taguig.

The court boasts uniform grain-washed sand, drainage system, bright lighting, shower and locker facilities, and a lightning-detector system.

Initially, the tournament will be among females and will be televised regularly. Joe Cantada, sports producer of "Fistorama" will handle production.

There will be a meeting at the CSC at noon on Friday. For inquiries, call 0917-8332353, 0917817-0212 or 8443143.

SBMA tennis website

WANT to know the latest happenings in the country's tennis scene? Visit www.subicbaytennis.com.

The SBMA International Tennis Center boasts world-class facilities and a competent coaching staff headed by Beeyong Sison, who played in all Grand Slams (Wimbledon, French, US and Australian Opens).

Among those who have been training under Sison and company are rising Davis Cup standout PJ Tierro and junior champion Nico de Dios.

Also handling classes are USPTA-certified pro George Zahorsky, national coach Martin Misa, and ITF-certified pro Francis Factura. The center is fully supported by SBMA chair Tong Payumo.

National 8-cocker

THE "BAKBAKAN Open National 8-Cock Derby" enters its semifinal round at 6 p.m. today at Roligon Mega Cockpit with 77 fights lined up.

Elimination rounds (3-cock) saw 12 entries manage to score three wins each. The pacesetters are Col Andaya (King Gerald John), Nestor Vendivil (Oliver), Nani dela Gente (Eskrimador Atilla Farm), Freddie Yulo (Red Baron), Bobby Wong (Flyover Showdown I), Leo Delfinado (CMS Napdel), Marcel Julao (MTJ Bros), Lito Castillo (KGBA RCF Razorback), Joseph Chua (Jopete Kamay Na Kamay), Raymond Velayo and Boy Diaz (Arnismaster April 13 and 15), Nelson Uy (MNSU Red Hawk), Biboy Enriquez and Lito Castelo (Tornado Dalubhasa I).

The derby sponsors are Thunderbird Multi Grain, Bexan XP, Thunderbird Platinum, Asvet and Vitarich Panabong. For inquiries, call 833-2275, 8331638, 85-29774 and 8529812 (look for Shirley, Aubrey and Tiling).

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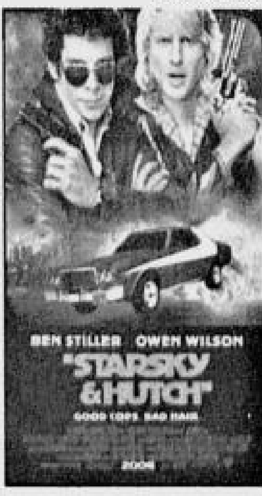

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2 PAYCHECK 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:50, 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
4 PETER PAN 10:35, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45
5 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
6 TAKING LIVES 10:35, 12:50, 3:00, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 50 FIRST DATES 11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:30
8 ACACIA 11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:30
9 TWISTED 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40
10 THE UNINVITED 11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:45

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
2 ACACIA 10:30, 12:25, 2:20, 4:15, 6:10, 8:05, 10:00
3 TAKING LIVES 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
4 TWISTED 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
5 PETER PAN 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:40
6 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
7 PAYCHECK 11:25, 1:55, 4:25, 6:55, 9:40

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1 TWISTED 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:15, 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15
3 THE UNINVITED 11:40, 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00
4 PETER PAN 10:25, 1:05, 3:15, 6:25, 9:05
5 TAKING LIVES 12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00
6 ACACIA 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
7 PAYCHECK 10:25, 1:05, 3:45, 6:25, 9:05
8 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 10:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

Big R Supercenter
NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:20, 3:00, 5:40, 8:30
2 TWISTED 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:10
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
4 TAKING LIVES 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
5 PAYCHECK 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
6 ACACIA 11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
7 THE UNINVITED 10:20, 12:45, 3:10, 5:35, 8:10
8 PETER PAN 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30

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1 PETER PAN
2 PAYCHECK
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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1 TAKING LIVES
2 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
3 PAYCHECK
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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STA. ROSA
Laguna (049)837-0907

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PETER PAN
4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
5 PAYCHECK

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1 HIGHWAYMEN
2 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
3 THE GRUDGE 2
4 TAKING LIVES
5 HIDALGO

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1 TAKING LIVES
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 HIDALGO
5 HIGHWAYMEN

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1 ACACIA
2 THE CURSE
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
5 PAYCHECK
6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5856

1 PAYCHECK
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 TWISTED
4 ACACIA
5 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
6 PETER PAN

BACOLOD 441-0458/59

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2 WISE GIRLS
3 HIGHWAYMEN
4 BONE SNATCHER
5 RUNAWAY JURY
6 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

ILOILO 336-8070/78

1 HIDALGO
2 50 FIRST DATES
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
5 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
6 THE CURSE

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LITTLE LEAGUE

Bacolod batters cop 2 titles

TANAUAN CITY, Batangas—DepEd Bacolod Softbelles won the titles in both the Little League and Junior League division of the Little League Philippine Series baseball/softball tournament at the Tanauan fields in Barangay Pagaspas here.

In the 11-12 years category, the Bacolod girls routed ILLAM, 12-1, to retain their crown while their sisters in the Junior League (13-14) made it a twin kill by demolishing another ILLAM team, 12-0.

The Bacolod junior leaguers inherited the title won by their provincemates from Bacolod City last year. The Bacolod City lasses went on to rule last year's World Series in Kirkland, Washington.

In Little League boys' baseball, the Sulong Pa, Bulacan kids of Gov. Josie de la Cruz struck again with a 16-5 drubbing of Valenzuela to join ILLAM, Bacolod, Marist and Lipa, which won its 1-inning suspended game against Sta. Cruz, Laguna (11-10), in the quarterfinal round.

Still being contested are two slots in group C and one in group D. Tanauan, Mt. Province and Nueva Ecija are contesting the group C slots while Batangas City and Silay City are disputing the group D spot.

Regine Sta. Ana, who made a name in his first three games by collecting seven home runs, once again delighted the crowd with his booming bat as he made two more four-baggers with 3 RBIs (runs batted in) to boot.

5 Mile Classic registry opens

REGISTRATION for the Greenhills 5 Mile Classic slated May 9 at the Greenhills Shopping Center starts today, according to Dr. Jerry Jarin, president of the organizing Greenhills Running Club. Now on its fourth year, the event is sponsored by Procter and Gamble Phils. Distributing Inc. in cooperation with the Greenhills Shopping Center and the Lucio Tan group of companies. Registration fee is P150 and will run until May 4. For inquiries, call 727-9987.

Araneta Center

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 4	TAKING LIVES
Ali 5	PETER PAN
Ali 6	THE UNINVITED
Ali 7	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

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APR 25	PBA : COKE VS. PUREFOODS
APR 30	ANDREA BOCELLI LIVE IN MANILA
MAY 1	PBA : ALASKA VS. SHELL
MAY 2	PBA : RED BULL VS. FEDEX
MAY 3	AMA GRADUATION

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	LIGAYA / NANABIK
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	ITLOG
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ACACIA
CINEMA-2	PUNLA
CINEMA-3	UNINVITED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-6	SORUM
CINEMA-7	NANANABIK
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PETER PAN
CINEMA-12	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-14	TWISTED
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	HIDALGO
CINEMA-4	GRUDGE 2

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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MOVIE GUIDE

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(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 (SDDS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
3 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
4 GOLD (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	TWISTED
6 GOLD (SDDS)	TAKING LIVES
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	MISSING
8 (PWS)	BOOBITA ROSE
9 (PWS)	ACACIA
10 (PWS)	PETER PAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
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1 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK
2 (DOLBY)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 (DOLBY)	TAKING LIVES
4 (DOLBY)	PETER PAN

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	TWISTED
3	ACACIA

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(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	TAKING LIVES
	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	TWISTED
5	

METROPOLIS star
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(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	TAKING LIVES
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3	TWISTED
4	PETER PAN
5	PAY CHECK
6	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

M star
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(Las Piñas)
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1	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2	SCOOBY DOO-2

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2	GOTHIKA

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	MASIKIP
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

5	RESERVE
6	
7 (DTS)	
8 (SDDS)	
9 (DOLBY)	

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	TAKING LIVES
2	PETER PAN
3	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (SDDS)	TWISSTED
5	PAY CHECK
6 (DOLBY)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 (DTS)	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
8	VENUS
9	ACACIA

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1	RESERVE
2 (SDDS)	
3 (DTS)	
4 (DOLBY)	
5	

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	ACACIA
2	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 (DTS)	TAKING LIVES
4	BOOBITA ROSE
5 (SDDS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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1	RESERVE

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1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	TWISSTED
3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4	PETER PAN

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
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1 (DOLBY)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	PAYCHECK
3	TWISSTED
4	BOOBITA ROSE
5	TAKING LIVES

Berma Cinema
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1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	ACACIA

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2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (SDDS)	PAYCHECK
5 (DTS)	PASSION OF CHRIST
6	PETER PAN
7	TAKING LIVES

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	PAY CHECK
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS ES)	PASSION OF CHRIST
4	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	PAYCHECK
3 (DOLBY)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 (DTS)	PASSION OF CHRIST

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	ACACIA
3 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK
4 (DTS)	50 FIRST DATE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	PAYCHECK
3 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2 (DTS)	DEATH CURSE
3 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK
4	PETER PAN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2 (DOLBY)	PETER PAN
3 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	50 FIRST DATE
2	GRUDGE-2
3 (DOLBY)	SCOOBY DOO-2

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	HAUNTED OFFICE
2	HIDALGO
3 (DOLBY)	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
4 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1	PASSION OF CHRIST
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3	HIDALGO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
2	KARIBAL
3	PORNOGRAPHER
4 (DTS)	BOOBITA ROSE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	PETER PAN
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
4	TAKING LIVES
5	HIGHWAY MEN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	VENUS
2	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	PETER PAN
2	TAKING LIVES
3	BOOBITA ROSE

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	GRUDGE-2
2	50 FIRST DATE
3 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO-2
4 (DOLBY)	BOOBITA ROSE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	THE GRUDGE-2
3	HIDALGO
4	TAKING LIVES

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	KARIBAL

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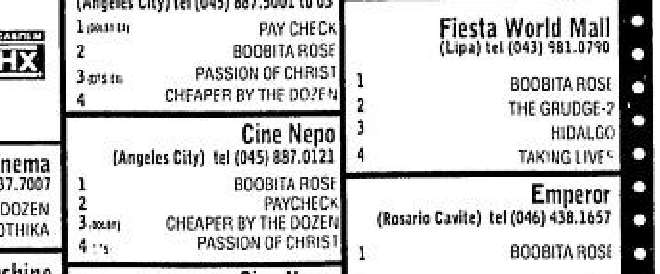

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1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10 PG-13
2	PAY CHECK 12:05, 2:45, 5:25 8:05, 10:45 PG-13
3	PETER PAN 11:20, 1:40, 4:00 6:20, 8:40, 10:55 GP
4	TAKING LIVES 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00 R-18

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TWISTED R13 12:20, 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20	PETER PAN GP 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	TAKING LIVES R18 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:40, 2:10, 5:00, 7:30, 10:10	PETER PAN R13 1:45, 4:10, 6:35, 9:00	PAYCHECK PG13 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30

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CINEMA 2	PETER PAN 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50 GP

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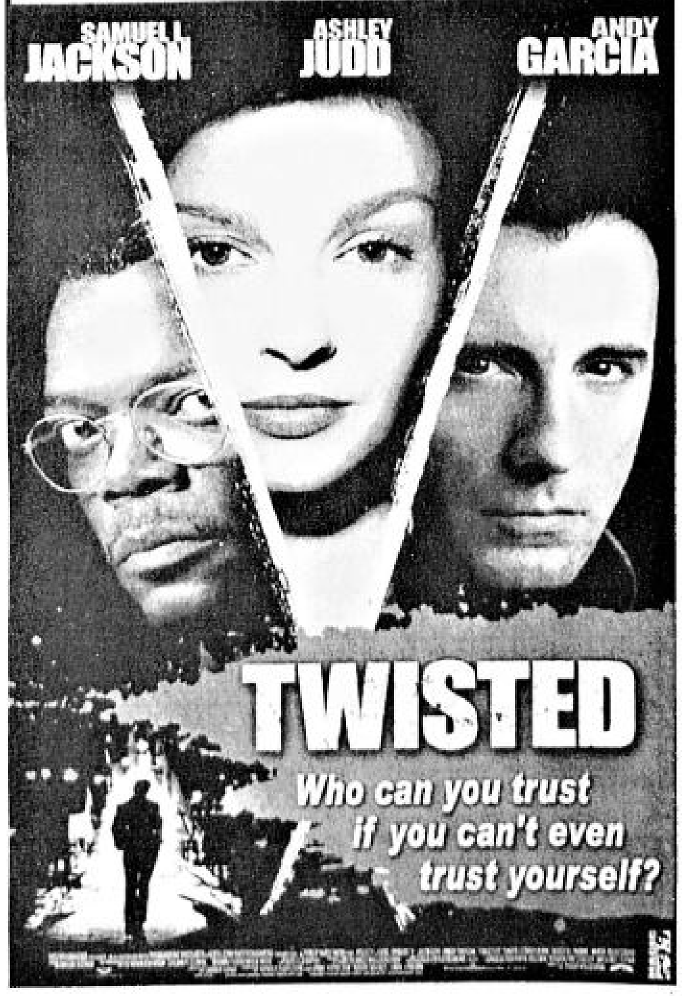


Byrd keeps title; Ruiz wins ugly fight

NEW YORK—Chris Byrd, fighting at his crafty best, kept a determined Andrew Golota off of him enough Saturday to retain his IBF heavyweight title in a fight that was up for grabs until the very end.

Polish-born Golota was the aggressor the entire way at Madison Square Garden, but Byrd landed well with counter shots to the head, fighting off the ropes at times and using all his boxing skills against a bigger and stronger challenger.

The fight was one of two heavyweight title fights on the card. In the other, John Ruiz stopped Fres Oquendo late in the 11th round to retain the WBA title.

Judge Steve Weisfeld had Byrd winning 115-113, while Tony Paolillo had Golota ahead by the same margin. Melvina Latham had it 114-114, the same as The Associated Press. *AP*

SACRAMENTO Kings' Doug Christie slam dunks against the Dallas Mavericks Thursday. The Kings won, 120-102. EPA

Lakers, 3 others triumph

LOS ANGELES—Shaquille O'Neal's Los Angeles Lakers emerged with a one-point victory over Yao Ming's Houston Rockets Saturday as all four home teams posted wins on the first day of the National Basketball Association playoffs.

O'Neal's dunk over Yao with 17 seconds left let the Lakers edge the Rockets, 72-71, Houston squandering an opportunity to tilt the Western Conference first-round series in their favor.

The San Antonio Spurs, New Jersey Nets and Indiana Pacers triumphed in more comfortable style.

The matchup between the second-seeded Lakers and seventh-seeded Rockets was billed as a showdown between O'Neal and Yao, who had battled on relatively even terms over the last two seasons.

Their first postseason matchup was more of the same. China's Yao had just 10 points and 11 rebounds but did not allow O'Neal to dominate, limiting him to 20 points on 8-of-17 shooting.

Digging in with defense, the Rockets were clinging to a 71-70 lead as they trapped Kobe Bryant above the 3-point arc with the shot clock running down. Bryant, who made just 4-of-19 shots, fired an airball.

Under the basket, O'Neal bodied Yao out of the way, grabbed the miss and powered in a dunk that drew Yao's sixth foul.

O'Neal missed the freethrow, going just 4-of-14 from the line and giving the Rockets a chance to win. After a series of timeouts, Rockets All-Star guard Steve Francis penetrated and found Jim Jackson wide open in the left corner.

But Jackson, who had made a 3-pointer from the same spot earlier in the period, missed this time. O'Neal corralled his 17th rebound as time expired. *AFP*

Other results:

Indiana 104, Boston 88, Indiana leads series 1-0

New Jersey 107, New York 83, New Jersey leads series 1-0

San Antonio 98, Memphis 74, San Antonio leads series 1-0 *AP*

Roddick reaches clay final

HOUSTON—Top seed Andy Roddick encountered little resistance from Luis Horna Saturday, advancing to the final of the US Men's Clay Court championship with a straight-set win over the Peruvian.

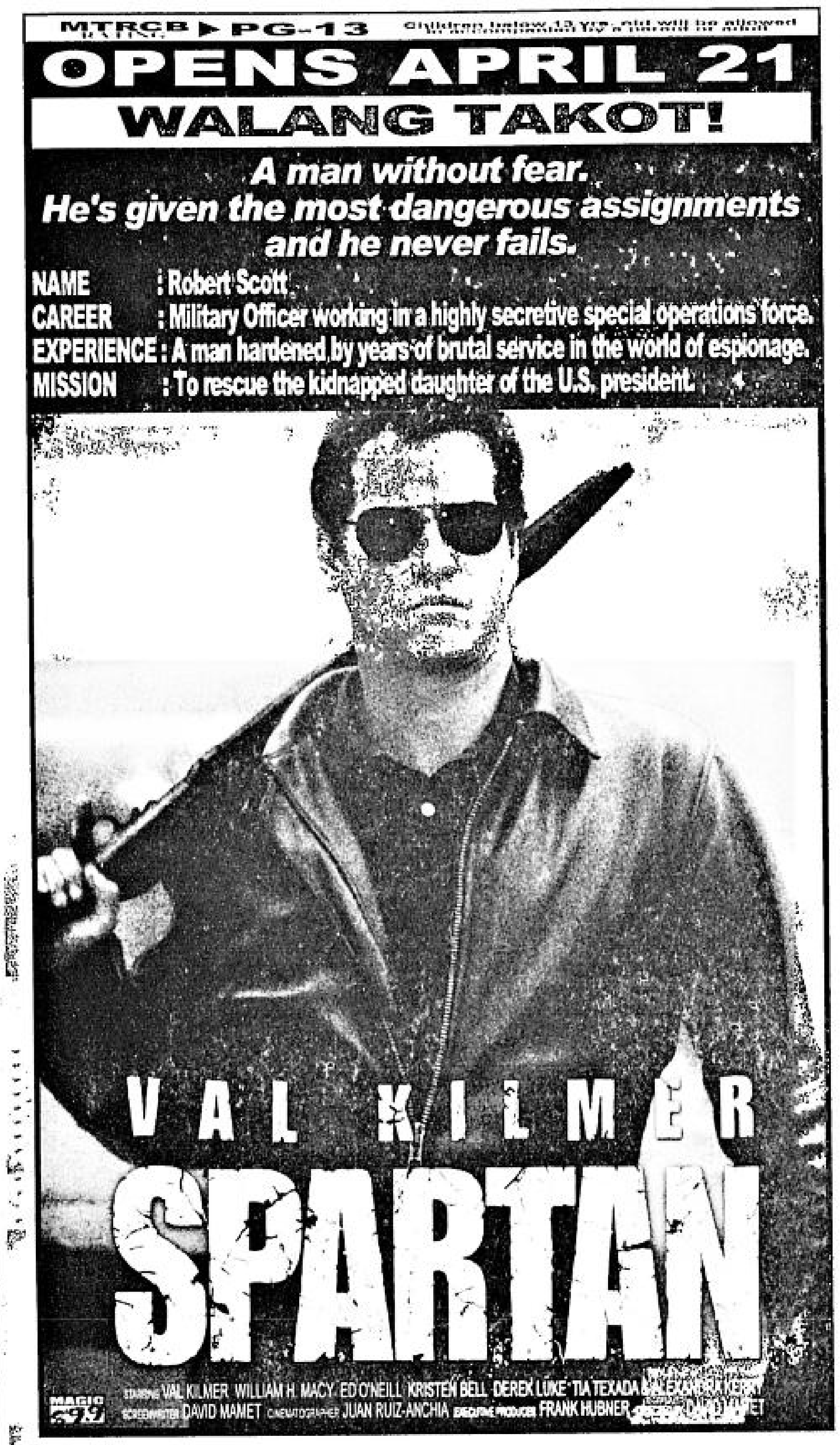
The 21-year-old American defeated Horna, 6-3, 6-4, to advance to a final showdown with resurgent German Tommy Haas.

Roddick improved to 18-1 all time in this event. He won back-to-back titles here in 2001-02 and was runner-up to Andre Agassi last year.

"That's a good start, I feel really comfortable here," Roddick said. "It's a nice, relaxing week to sort of kick off the clay court season. It's definitely a good stepping stone for me and I'm thrilled to be back in the final here." The reigning US Open champion, Roddick has won 12 straight matches, dating to a victory at the Tennis Masters Series in Miami, where he captured his third career Masters Series crown.

Roddick won both singles matches last weekend in a Davis Cup quarterfinal win over Sweden. He has won an ATP-best 32 matches this season.

Horna had won his only previous meeting with Roddick in a 2001 Challenger tournament in Bermuda. He was playing in his second semifinal on clay. *AFP*



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13

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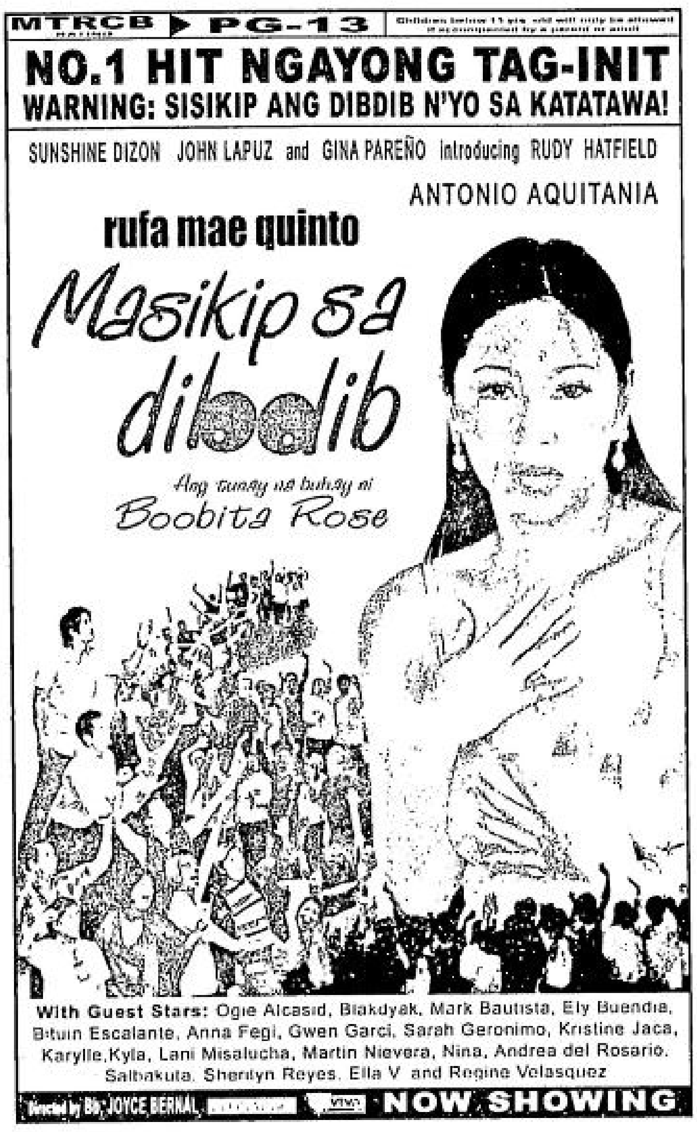
SCREENWRITER DAVID MAMET CINEMATOGRAPHER JUAN RUIZ-ANCHIA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FRANK HUBNER



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13

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ANTONIO AQUITANIA

With Guest Stars: Ogie Alcasid, Blakdyak, Mark Bautista, Ely Buendia, Bituin Escalante, Anna Fegi, Gwen Garci, Sarah Geronimo, Kristine Jaca, Karylle, Kyla, Lani Misalucha, Martin Nievera, Nina, Andrea del Rosario, Salbakuta, Sherilyn Reyes, Ella V and Regine Velasquez

Directed by Bb. JOYCE BERNAL

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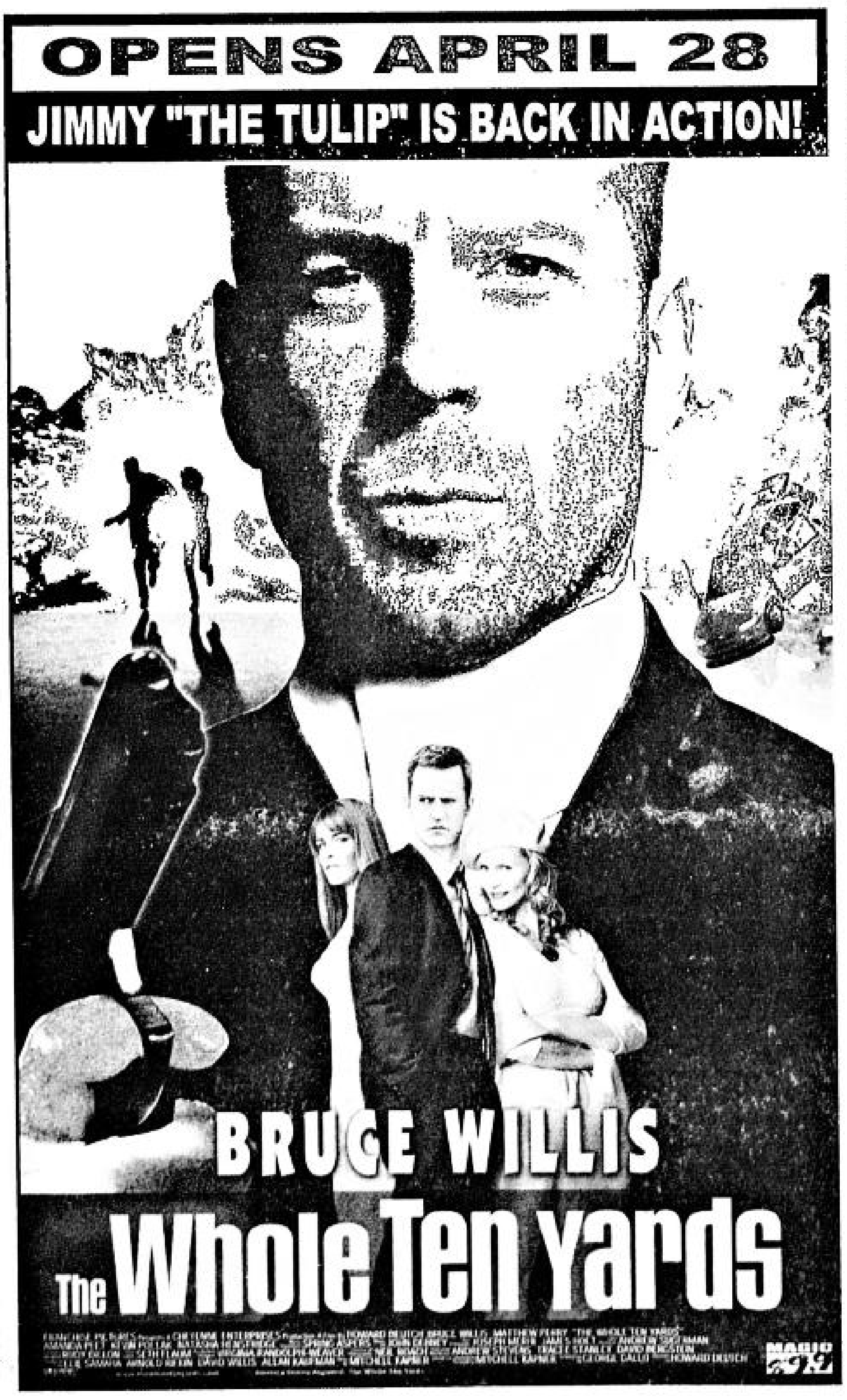
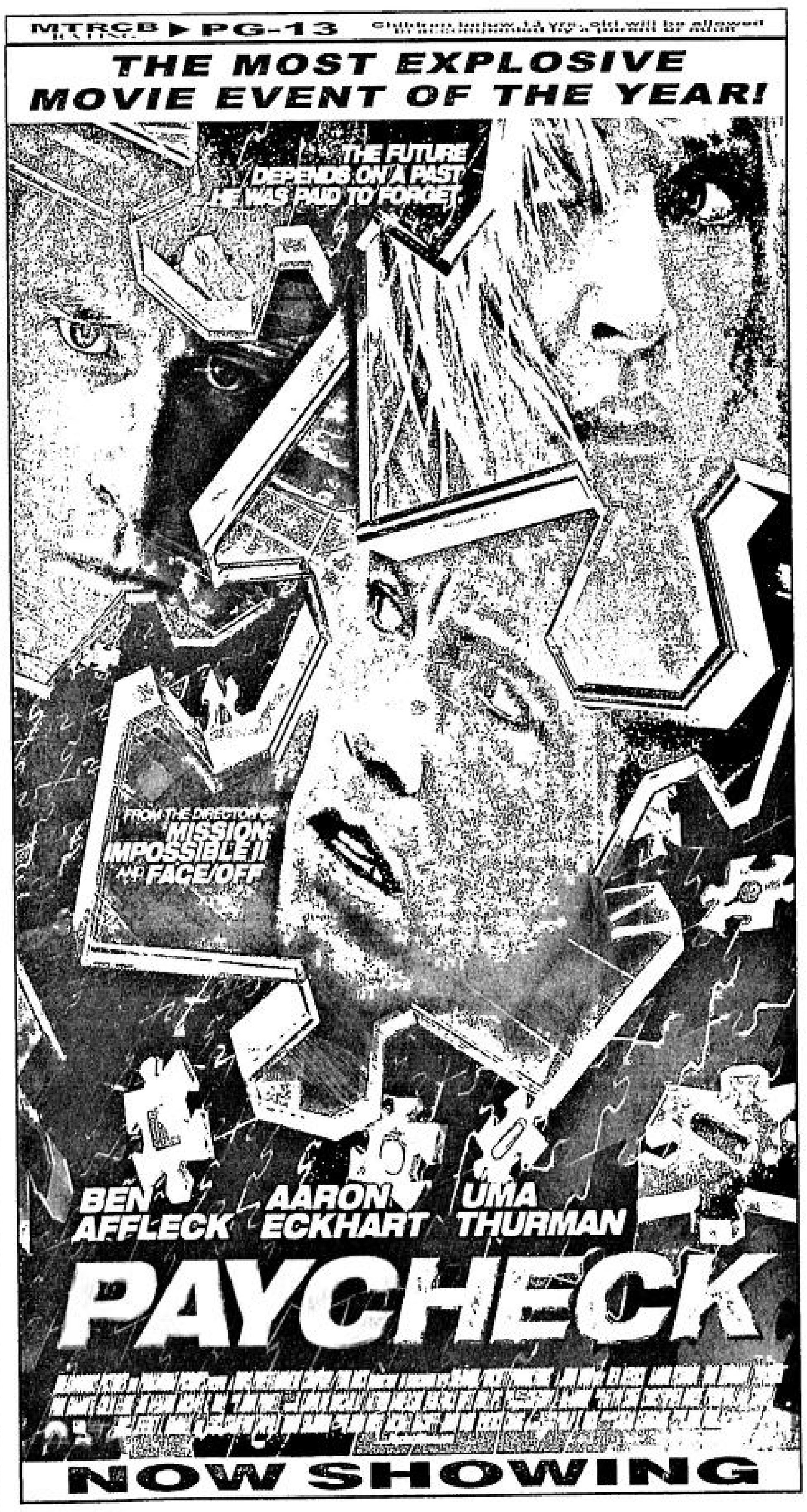


OPENS APRIL 28

JIMMY "THE TULIP" IS BACK IN ACTION!



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AARON ECKHART
UMA THURMAN
PAYCHECK

NOW SHOWING

Jenny bags ₱.6 million; Kerr reigns

By Jong Arcano

JENNY Rosales missed her target again after a late rush of bogeys sent her falling to a share of 20th place in the LPGA Takefuji Classic won on Saturday by American Kristie Kerr via a marathon seven-hole sudden-death playoff at the Las Vegas Country Club in Nevada.

Through the first 13 holes, Rosales was on pace to hit her first Top 10 finish with a one under card. But she bogeyed three of the last five for a two-over-par 74 and a 217 aggregate.

If it's any consolation, Rosales posted her best finish so far in four starts that gave her $11,498 (about P640,000). She withdrew with a wrist injury in the second round of the Welch's/Fry's Championship, placed 21st in the Safeway International and wound up a far 58th in the season first major, the Kraft Nabisco.

Rosales played in Las Vegas with her swing coach Bong Lopez carrying the bag. She fired her longtime caddie Sam Hanshow on the eve of the tournament due to differences in reading the greens.

A closing 72 lifted Fil-Am Dorothy Delasin to a share of 11th worth $19,571.

Kerr shook off a shaky finish and rolled in a short birdie putt on the seventh playoff hole to beat South Korean rookie Seol-An Jeon.

Kerr put behind her a collapse on the final nine holes and outlasted Jeon in one of the longest playoffs in LPGA Tour history.

WILLIAMS

Venus gains first final after six-month layoff

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Venus Williams defeated Croatia's Jelena Kostanic, 6-4, 6-1, here Saturday to reach a finals date with Spain's Conchita Martinez at the $1.3 million-dollar WTA Family Circle Cup.

The 23-year-old American advanced to her first final since a six-month layoff with a strained abdominal muscle following her loss to younger sister Serena in last year's Wimbledon final.

"I feel great about getting to the finals of this event, my first clay court of the year, first final of the year," said the former No. 1, who is making her debut at this tournament.

But Williams, who will be seeking her 30th career title, had to hustle in the first set as her left-handed opponent delivered a potent mix of shots including some well-disguised drop-shots.

"When I'm playing good, my drop shots are probably pretty good, and a lot of players struggle with them," said Kostanic, who scored her best Tier I result this week. "I just know I have that kind of variety where I can play long slice, short slice, drop shot, and I'm not scared to play it." *AFP*

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AYALA CINEMAS

Cinema	ATC (ALABANG TOWN CENTER)	G1 (GLORIETTA 1)	G4 (GLORIETTA 4)	GB1 (GREENBELT 1)	GB3 (GREENBELT 3)	ACC (AYALA CENTER CEBU)
1	THX THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	PAYCHECK	BIG FISH	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10	GUARANTEED SEATS THX THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2	PETER PAN	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	TAKING LIVES	BIG FISH 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	GUARANTEED SEATS THX PAYCHECK 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:20	GRUDGE 2
3	TAKING LIVES	PETER PAN	GUARANTEED SEATS THX THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30		GUARANTEED SEATS PETER PAN 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	50 FIRST DATES
4	TWISTED	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB		GUARANTEED SEATS TWISTED 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
5	PAYCHECK		PETER PAN		GUARANTEED SEATS TAKING LIVES 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6			PAYCHECK			
7			TWISTED			

ENTERTAINMENT LIVE!

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HARD ROCK CAFÉ, GLORIETTA 3 FEATURING DIMSUM (9:30 PM)	MERK'S: Happy Hour - Mae; Aretha with the Soul'd Out Band TAVERN ON THE SQUARE: Fat Session (9:30pm)

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
NICKELODEON'S SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BIKINI BOTTOM BASH April 15 to 17 - 3:00pm and 5:00pm, April 18 - 1:00pm 3:00pm 5:00 pm	MEDI MARKETING HEALTH & BEAUTY FAIR April 16 to 18, 2004	TV ESKWELA SHOW April 24, 2004

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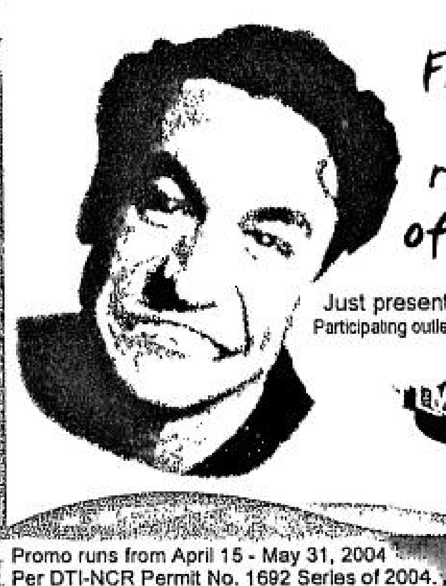
BIG FISH
AN ADVENTURE AS BIG AS LIFE ITSELF
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance13 (PG-13)



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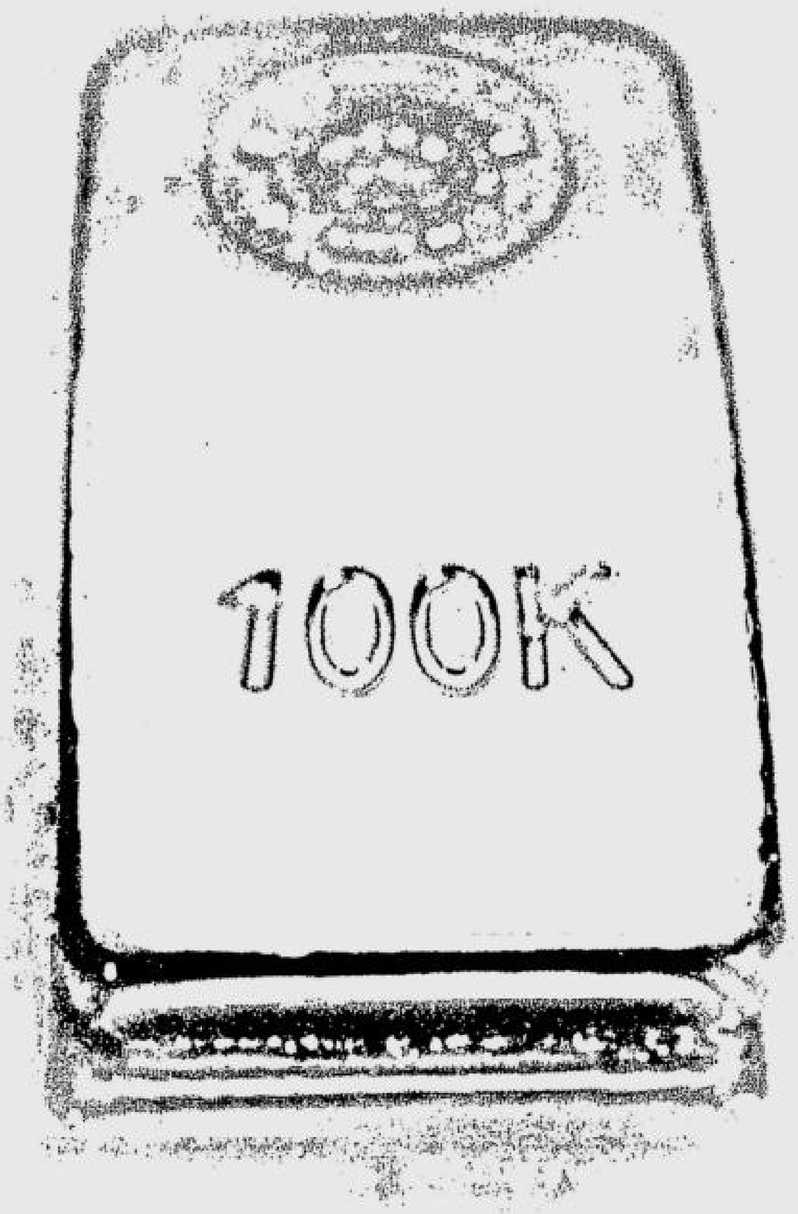
Passion



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GSX A/T	842,000	100,000	63,978	44,066	35,014	25,102	20,481	17,564
GLX A/T	802,000	100,000	60,360	41,574	33,036	23,684	19,324	16,570
GL GAS	693,000	100,000	50,501	34,784	27,645	19,819	16,171	13,864
DLX GAS (15.20%dp)	658,000	100,000	47,335	32,603	25,914	18,578	15,159	12,995
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Groups to seek TRO vs oil price hikes

By Abigail L. Ho

THREE groups are preparing to challenge in court the right of oil oil companies to adjust pump prices on their own.

The Anakpawis National Political Party, labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and transport organization Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) are preparing to file a petition with the Supreme Court for a temporary restraining order on any more oil price increases in the near future.

The three groups are considering filing the petition in light of the successive oil price adjustments implemented this year.

Local pump prices of fuel have increased four times since the start of the year.

The groups will also be taking into consideration the more than 60 times that local pump prices of fuel increased at varying levels since the Downstream Oil Deregulation Act took effect in 1998.

"The High Court should welcome this petition with alacrity and immediately decide on it in favor of the petitioners and the Filipino public," Anakpawis chair Crispin Beltran said in a statement.

Earlier in the week, several oil companies hinted at a 70-centavo increase in gasoline pump prices because of the high costs of both crude and finished products in the international market.

But Beltran said this plan to again implement an increase in pump prices of gasoline could spark mass actions, particularly in the days running up to the May polls.

He urged voters to elect officials who had enough political will to stand against more increases in oil prices and utility rates in general, including those of water and electricity.

"Another (oil price increase) spells catastrophe for the Filipino people who are already traumatized by the economic crisis. The public should only consider candidates who will take a strong stand against (oil price hikes) and high rates of utilities in general," he said.

Beltran criticized President Macapagal-Arroyo for not having enough political will to stand against "the oil cartel."

"As for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, she has proven herself to be an ally of the oil cartel against drivers and consumers, and is all for oil deregulation. Voting for her should not even be an option," he said.

He accused local oil firms of overpricing their products by at least 52 centavos a liter annually, allegedly resulting in an average additional profit of about P1.22 billion.

But Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association chair Fernando Martinez said in an earlier interview that a 70-centavo increase in gasoline pump prices was sorely needed at this time as most companies still had not recovered losses that they incurred from the past few months' extremely high world market costs.

Even with the 60-centavo increase in gasoline pump prices implemented last month, he said new oil players still had under-recoveries of between 60 centavos and 90 centavos a liter of gasoline.

For diesel, he said under-recoveries stood at about 90 centavos a liter. Oil firms, however, were not inclined to jack up diesel prices because of the socially sensitive nature of the product.

Meralco to issue $600M worth of bonds

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez and Abigail L. Ho

POWER distributor Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) will offer $600 million or roughly P33.74 billion worth of bonds to raise funds for debt financing and working capital.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) recently approved the bond issue, which will provide security to Meralco's existing unsecured creditors over assets covered by a Mortgage Trust Indenture. The MTI takes into account all assets of the company for possible use as collateral.

The bonds will be issued to banks, equipment suppliers and other local and foreign creditors.

Meralco can issue bonds on the basis of the value of its mortgaged property worth up to $1.01 billion.

Meantime, issuing financial instruments to large power users is still a much better option than converting part of its P18.6-billion Phase 4 refund into equity, a study done by Manila Electric Co.'s finance department showed.

"The advantages of issuing refund notes far outweighed those of converting into equity, both for the customers and for the company," Meralco refund task force project manager Cheri Torres said in a telephone interview.

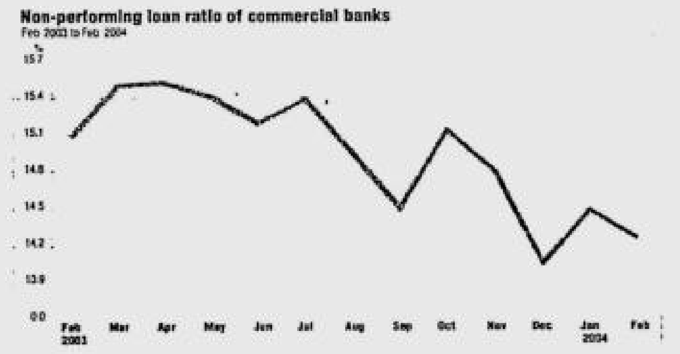
According to the Meralco study, the refund notes are better than equity in the form of common shares as these are not subject to a decline in value.

While the refund notes that Meralco intends to issue are non-interest bearing, these are also not pegged on the performance of the market and on prevailing interest rates at the time of maturity.

Common shares, Torres said; would be affected by market fluctuations.

Also, doing an equity conversion would result in the dilution of ownership of existing shareholders, which, she said, would have to go through tedious and time-consuming consultations.

"A barrier we see in the equity conversion proposal is the fact that all shareholders will have to be consulted before it can be done. This is a long, tedious and costly process," she said.



Non-performing loan ratio of commercial banks
Feb 2003 to Feb 2004

Banks' bad loans decline in January

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BAD loan ratio of the country's commercial banks stood at 14.24 percent of their total loan portfolio as of February this year, only slightly improving from the 14.47 percent in January.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that the sector's non-performing loan ratio for February, however, was an improvement from the 15.08 percent during the same month a year ago.

BSP officials admitted that the pace of NPL ratio decline was slow at the moment, but they expected bigger improvements soon.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura noted that the resolution of the National Steel Corp. debt problem through an asset sale to a special purpose vehicle should bring down the level of the banking system's NPLs by 5 percent.

The banking system's total exposure to NSC stood at P12.65 billion out of the sector's NPL level of P250.39 billion as of February. It is the single biggest problematic corporate debt hounding the sector.

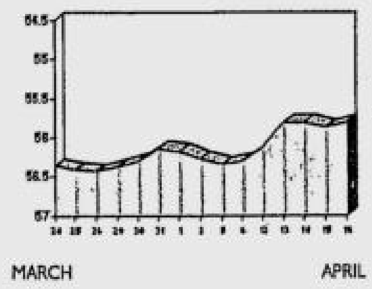
"We hope this will encourage others to do the same," he said.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes added: "We expect to see further improvement in the NPL ratio as banks intensify collection

BANKS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 55.80= $ 1
As of 5 p.m., April 16, 2004

¥ 108.38 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., April 16, 2004

GOLD: $400.20-400.70
per ounce Hong Kong, April 16, 2004

April1 6, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.834655	1.000000	55.8800
Japan	Yen	0.007705	0.009231	0.5158
United Kingdom	Pound	1.495368	1.791600	100.1146
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107030	0.128233	7.1657
Switzerland	Franc	0.644073	0.771664	43.1206
Canada	Dollar	0.621763	0.744934	41.6269
Singapore	Dollar	0.497648	0.596232	33.3174
Australia	Dollar	0.616801	0.738989	41.2947
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.214056	2.652661	148.2307
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222575	0.266667	14.9014
Brunei	Dollar	0.496169	0.594460	33.2184
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021098	0.025278	1.4125
UAE	Dirham	0.227246	0.272264	15.2141
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.198100	66.9498
Argentina	Peso	0.297030	0.355872	19.8861
Brazil	Real	0.287416	0.344353	19.2424
Denmark	Kroner	0.134355	0.160971	8.9951
India	Rupee	0.019013	0.022779	1.2729
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219675	0.263193	14.7072
Mexico	New Peso	0.074146	0.088834	4.9640
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530411	0.635486	35.5110
Norway	Kroner	0.120751	0.144672	8.0843
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014528	0.017406	0.9726
South Africa	Rand	0.126631	0.151717	8.4779
Korea	Won	0.000724	0.000867	0.0484
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025346	0.030367	1.6969

STOCK MARKET

Weak trading seen to persist

TRADING is expected to remain weak this week, except for pockets of bargain-hunting based on "technical plays", analysts and fund managers said on Friday.

So far, they said it was still the same old tune playing, with uncertainties over the elections still hanging over investors' heads.

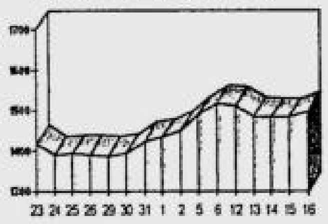
"The entire market is not going anywhere until such time that the election uncertainty is cleared," said Artemio Tanchoco Jr., vice president at Cocolife.

ATR Kim Eng economist Luz Lorenzo said the market had already factored in the good news on the country's budget deficit, closely watched for its impact on interest rates.

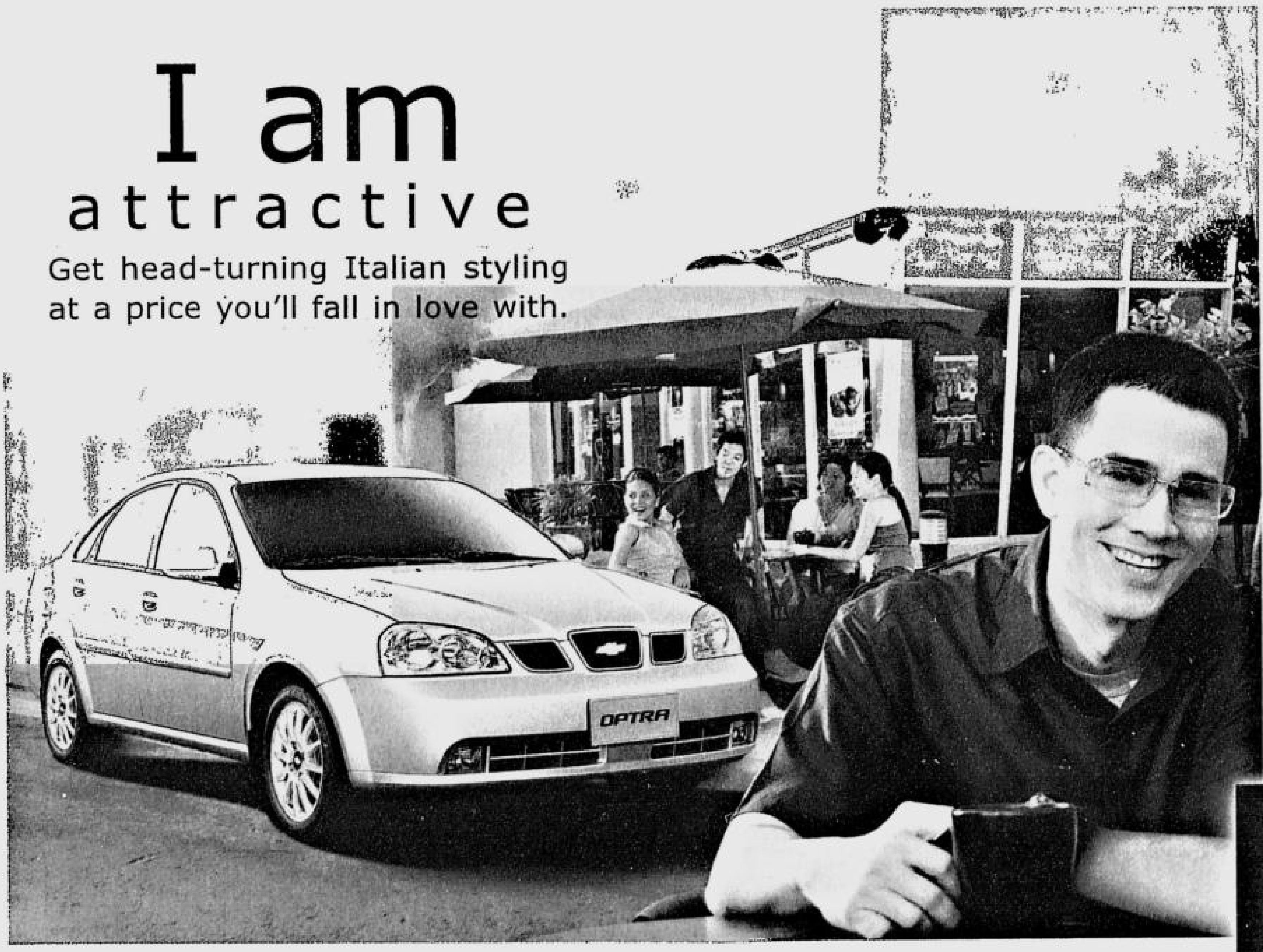
Investors keep tab of interest rate trends since these would impact on

WEAK/ B6

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)



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MINDANAWORLD

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From page B1

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High court junks complaint against BSP officials

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SUPREME Court has dismissed an administrative complaint filed by the defunct Rural Bank of San Miguel Inc., once the biggest rural bank in Bulacan, against top officials of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

In a recent ruling issued by the SC's special second division, the high court junked the complaints filed by RBSM and its president/major stockholder Hilario Soriano against BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes, director Wilfredo B. Domo-ong and examiner Herminio Principio.

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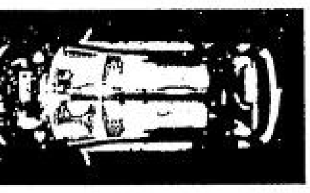
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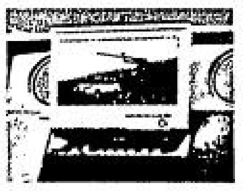
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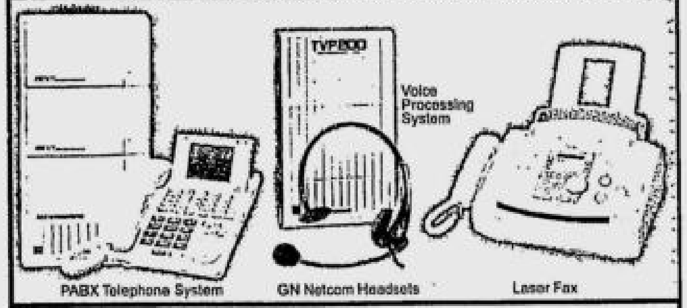

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Raising farm incomes

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

MANY Filipinos still think of our country as an agricultural economy. It is not. Only one-fifth (20 percent) of the economy's total output, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP), actually comes from agriculture. And yet the sector accounts for more than one-third (37 percent) of total employment. In contrast, services now account for almost half (45 percent) of our economy's output, while taking up also about half (47 percent) of our workers. These numbers indicate that there must be something wrong with labor productivity in agriculture. No wonder farmers and farm workers are poor.

It is not the farmers' or farm workers' fault that output per worker is low. They are simply working in an industry where lack of modern inputs (seeds, fertilizers and machines, to name some) and of support facilities (irrigation, post-harvest facilities, communication facilities and roads) severely limits how much they can produce. As a result, our average rice and corn yields are much lower than that of most of our neighbors, being only half that of China and two-thirds that of Indonesia, for example.

What would it take to boost our farm productivity and incomes? There are many things needing change in the sector, but let me focus on a few prominent ones.

Local responsibility

The city of Tuguegarao has decided to devote a substantial part of its resources to helping its farmers achieve higher productivity through assistance in their access to modern inputs without giving them away outright, including a farm machinery rental pool and common irrigation facilities. This is the way it should be. Resources and responsibility for raising productivity on the farms must be given to the units of government closest to the problem, and not be centrally managed from Manila. This can go even beyond the resources mandated to be devolved by the Local Government Code.

I am told that the Department of Agriculture (DA) has traditionally been able to spend less than 80 percent of its regular budget by early December of each year, and even less (70 percent) for official development assistance (ODA). Its absorptive capacity has apparently been low relative to other government departments, suggesting that agricultural support would be better handled by the local government units (LGUs). Thus, many have recommended that the DA's role be limited to implementing projects that transcend provinces and regions, maintaining standards, and providing technical support to local governments. It should then pass on most of its resources, whether from domestic or foreign funds, to the local governments for the latter to take responsibility for the projects needed by the sector. But this must be accompanied by transparency on the amount of funds flowing to the LGUs so that the people can ensure that they are indeed being put to good use by the local officials.

Agricultural cooperatives

In a sector now dominated by small farm holdings because of agrarian reform, the way to achieve greater efficiency through economies of scale is for farmers to band together into cooperatives. This would permit them to gain bargaining strength and lower unit costs through their numbers, both in the procurement of their inputs including access to credit, and in the marketing of their produce. South Korea has been particularly successful in harnessing cooperativism to assist small farmers raise their incomes. Their national agricultural cooperative system is so strong that it even owns a national cooperative bank, as well as the biggest terminal market for farm produce. Philippine experience with farm cooperatives has been a checkered one, but does have a good number of success stories whose lessons ought to guide others in the rest of the country. For all the challenges encountered in the past, farm cooperatives remain the best way to help farmers overcome the exploitative elements in the agricultural production and marketing system.

Irrigation, insurance and processing

The single most important infrastructure assistance to agriculture is irrigation. This is the primary difference explaining the disparity in the agricultural productivities between the Philippines and Vietnam. Our irrigated area is not only proportionately much less than that of Vietnam; it is actually declining, as we have been unable to even maintain existing irrigation systems properly. We need to rehabilitate, improve and maintain our irrigation facilities, and go beyond rice irrigation to cover high-value horticultural crops (fruits, vegetables, nuts and beverages) as well.

To make farmers bankable and thereby improve their access to formal (and cheaper) credit, there is a need to reinvigorate and correct previous flaws of the crop insurance system. Simply legislating the acceptability of agricultural land as bank loan collateral will not automatically improve farmers' access to bank credit. They have to be seen by the banks as good credit risks, and a well-working crop insurance system is needed to accomplish this in a production sector that is inherently risky and weather-prone.

Finally, farmers, particularly small ones, need a steady market for their produce. By facilitating investments in agricultural processing at or near production areas, the government can help secure the markets for small farmers who would otherwise be left at the mercy of traders, thereby securing their incomes as well. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

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Investment of OBUs in local bonds up

By Doris C. Dumlao

OFFSHORE banking units in the Philippines are pumping more funds into the local capital market through investments in bonds and other securities (IBODI).

Based on a report by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on the performance of OBUs, the sector's IBODI rose by 45.1 percent to $215.3 million in 2003 from $148.4 million in the previous year.

In 2002, the sector's IBODI likewise expanded by 66.87 percent from a year ago.

The share of IBODI to total assets of OBUs in 2003 rose to 25.6 percent from 17.9 percent in the previous year.

IBODI, by definition, refers to debt securities where the financial institution has the intention and ability to hold these securities to maturity. Such investments are measured at amortized cost where any realized gains or losses shall be included in reported current income.

The OBU sector's total assets, including "due to" accounts from head offices or branches abroad, grew by a modest 1.4 percent to $839.9 million as of end-2003.

Another major component of OBUs' assets consisted of loans to residents, which amounted to $253.6 million and accounted for 89.9 percent of total loan portfolio. However, loans to residents fell by 32 percent from a year ago.

By economic activity, manufacturing remained the major industry beneficiary, increasing by $41.4 million or 52.2 percent to $120.6 million from $79.2 million. The rest of the industry sectors, however, got a lower share of total loans.

The OBU sector's total loans and discounts to customers, including those extended to non-residents, fell by 15 percent to $282 million, reflecting the cautious lending mood in the entire Philippine banking system.

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

PARAÑAQUE Executive Judge Fortunito Madrona issued a 72-hour TRO against the United Laboratories Group at the instance of AstraZeneca, one of the five biggest drug companies in the world, to stop the local Unilab from manufacturing, distributing, and selling a popular anti-hypertension drug.

Two days later, on Friday, another Parañaque RTC judge, Raul de Leon, lifted the Madrona-issued order, saying the temporary restraining order had been invalidly served. Madrona, incidentally, is De Leon's superior.

The stake in this copyright battle? The P700-million local sales of Plendil, AstraZeneca's brand name for the blood pressure-lowering drug felodipine.

The irony of the AstraZeneca copyright suit is that, according to the medical grapevine, three other local, but smaller pharmaceutical companies have been producing felodipine even before Unilab's subsidiary, L.R. Imperial, decided to manufacture its own.

Unilab's defense is that it had even obtained a United States patent using a different manufacturing process so it could venture into the same line as had local firms Philippine Pharmawealth, Croma Medic, and New Smart Formulae.

According to the grapevine, Unilab has successfully undercut AstraZeneca, offering felodipine at P18.90 a tablet, against AstraZeneca's P37.70.

The Unilab Group, incidentally, is a key plank in President Macapagal-Arroyo's generic drug manufacturing program to bring down the cost of medicines.

Unilab is being represented by GMA lawyers Villaraza and Angangco; the London-based AstraZeneca, by Accra, the law firm founded by opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Garcias y Aboitizes

LIKE married couples stuck to each other, the Garcias and the Aboitizes have decided to keep their decades-old Indio and Castilaloy partnership in the Cebu power company, Veco, work.

To end their judicial wrangle over who shall control the Visayan Electric Co., the two leading families of Cebu last week submitted a compromise agreement to the Court of Appeals.

The formula is quite simple: The chairman and vice chairmanship of the power company shall be rotated between the two clans.

The presidency, however, is reserved for the Garcias, while the posts of chief operating officer, corporate secretary, and treasurer shall be the preserve of the Aboitizes.

In other words, the Castilaloys, for a change, will be the operating personnel for the Indios.

In the event of another power struggle, the two families may only sell out first to each other, but that the sale of the other bloc must be total.

Heard through the grapevine

THE SM Group is pushing for the appointment of former EPCIB comptroller Exequiel Villacorta as an independent director in tomorrow's stockholders' meeting of Equitable PCIBank, after about 10 million out of the 28 million proxy votes solicited by taipan Henry Sy from brokers and foreign institutional investors were invalidated by EPCIB lawyers on technicalities.

EPCIB, whose biggest shareholder now is the government through SSS and GSIS, is incidentally being represented by Accra.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Piltel creditors seek more time to study debt-swap offer

By Clarissa S. Batino

CREDITORS of Pilipino Telephone Corp. are planning to ask Smart Communications Inc. to extend the offer period to convert their exposure from Piltel to Smart, saying they needed more time to study the debt-swap proposal that would involve losses for most banks.

Smart, according to a creditor, even refused to provide a long-term financial projection that would allow banks to determine whether it would benefit them to accept the offer.

Smart gave Piltel creditors until tomorrow (April 20) to respond to its offer to absorb P20.5 billion in obligations of its losing affiliate through cash settlement at a discount, conversion into Smart's medium-term dollar loans at a discount, conversion into a 10-year debt of Smart, or a swap with sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds held by Smart.

A successful debt conversion would allow Smart to acquire the 45-percent stake of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in Piltel.

An official from one of Piltel's biggest creditors said the debt-swap options offered by Smart would entail a severe haircut—a term bankers use when the restructuring involves some losses for the bank—especially for lenders that have not fully made provisions for the soured Piltel loan in their books.

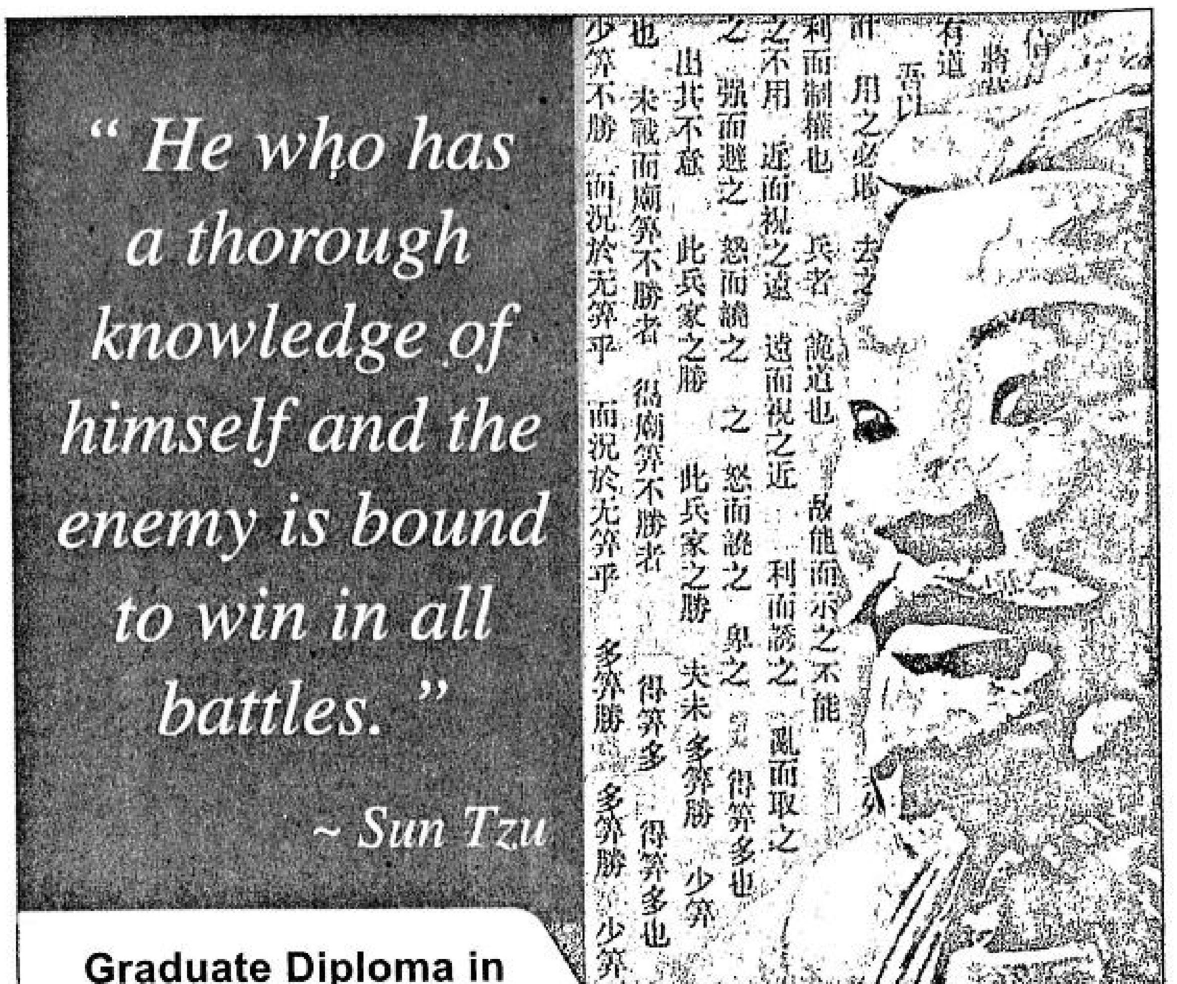
Bankers were not exactly thrilled with Smart's offer. "Most banks just want to have a closure to this Piltel saga. We are not looking forward to the debt swap as much as Smart or PLDT may want people to think. First, the proposal is complex. Second, it would involve huge losses especially for banks that have not fully provided for the Piltel loans in their books," another banker said.

One bank said it could lose roughly P180 million from the deal with Smart.

So far, banks surveyed last week gave mixed preliminary choices on Smart's offer.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. could swap its Piltel debt with sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds. United Coconut Planters Bank may choose the 10-year debt of Smart. Credit Agricole Indosuez could go for Smart loans maturing in 2007. Bank of the Philippine Islands is considering the same option.

Land Bank of the Philippines, which has a P1-billion exposure in Piltel, the second largest next to Japanese supplier Marubeni Corp., might go for the sovereign-guaranteed dollar bonds.



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~ Sun Tzu

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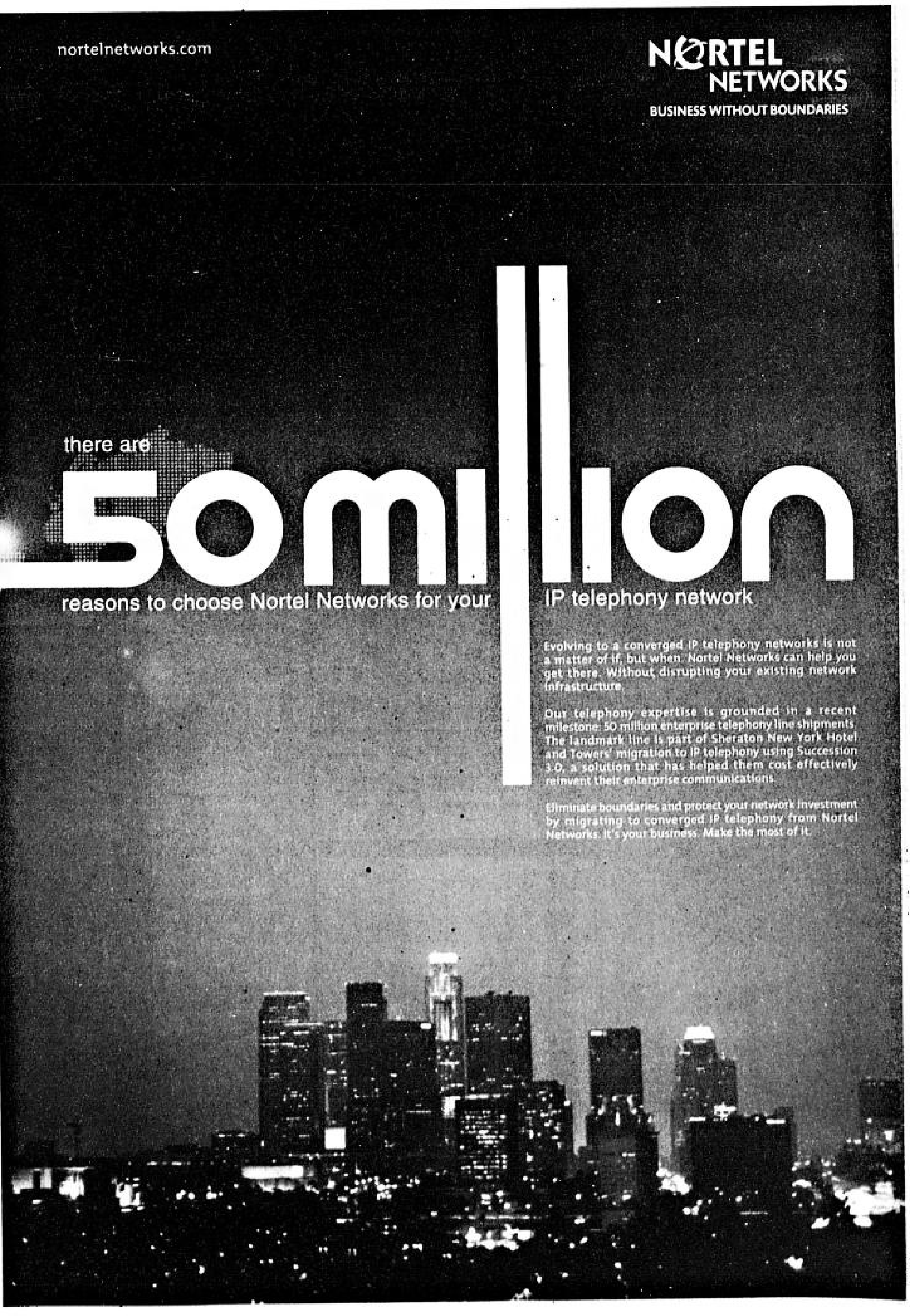

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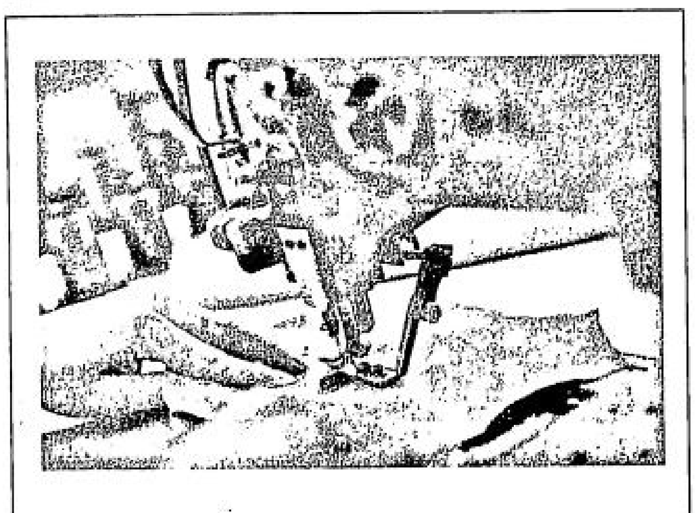
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Gov't, ADB seek to resolve issues delaying $200-M facility

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE government and the Asian Development Bank will meet this week to iron out their differences over the $200-million peso swap and financing facility.

The ADB facility, approved last January, seeks to provide long-term peso-denominated loans to selected banks for relending to businesses that are dependent on peso revenue.

The project seeks to help the end borrowers meet their long-term funding needs and boost their financial viability, without being burdened by currency and maturity mismatches.

AMATONG

The bank will raise the peso funds for the lending facility through cross-currency swaps of a convertible currency for pesos with the Philippine government. The local currency will be loaned to banks at a fixed interest rate without government guarantee.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said that while there were similar offers from other financial institutions like the World Bank, the finance department would still negotiate with ADB to be able to finally jump-start the facility

While there was a lot of demand for the facility, its operation has been derailed by differences on pricing. The government is asking the ADB to set the swap rates at below prevailing market rates.

Amatong said that with its triple-A credit rating, ADB could afford to give the Philippines lower rates.

"It (ADB) should pass on the benefit of its credit rating to countries like us," she said.

"The government has other swap arrangements with other sources," Amatong said, noting there was no urgent need for the arrangement with ADB.

Under the facility, the banks borrowing from the ADB will, in turn, have to relend to local businesses. The targeted sectors include infrastructure, transport, manufacturing, small and medium enterprises, housing, and expenditures on environmental improvement.

At present, long-term fixed-interest rate peso financing is in short supply in the country, limiting private sector and foreign investments in the country. The financing facility aims to address key constraints in financing sectors that are crucial to promoting economic growth.

Online display of financial reports pushed

By Elizabeth L.Sanchez

TO ENSURE greater transparency in the capital market, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) said it would require listed companies and broker-dealers to make their financial statements available online.

The SEC said it had written the Philippine Stock Exchange on the matter.

SEC also said earlier that it had agreed to relax a stock exchange rule which will allow directors and officers of listed companies to disclose their buying and selling of company shares within five days.

The ruling will make the PSE at par with other Asian bourses.

Under PSE's present rules, issuers or listed companies must disclose the direct and indirect ownership of its directors and principal officers of shares held in that company within two trading days.

Those who fail to comply are fined P50,000.

The PSE recommended that disclosure be instead made in five days to allow issuers to "reasonably comply" with the rule. This is to make it at par with other exchanges in Asia.

In Kuala Lumpur for instance, directors must disclose any buying or selling of shares within seven days from date of acquisition. Under the Jakarta Stock Exchange rules, ownership must be disclosed not later than ten days. In Australia and Hong Kong, disclosure is done within five days from the transaction date.

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chair Lilia Bautista had said the five-day rule is "reasonable."

Pagcor income up 7.13% to ₱5.4B in Q1

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement & Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) has reported an income of P5.41 billion for the first quarter of 2004.

The amount represents a 7.13-percent increase from year-ago level.

Its first quarter profit, along with its income of P1.92 billion for the month of March, is the highest-ever registered in the gaming firm's 21-year history.

Before this, Pagcor's highest recorded annual and monthly incomes were P20.21 billion and P1.85 billion, respectively, recorded in 2002.

Pagcor chair and CEO Efraim C. Genuino attributed the performance to President Macapagal-Arroyo's firm and able leadership.

"From day one, the President made it clear that her mandate was to make Pagcor the top revenue earner of the government to spur economic activity, provide jobs and enable us to contribute more substantially to much-needed government programs, especially those that would benefit the poor. We offer this victory to her who has inspired us no end to work harder," Genuino said.

The state-owned gaming firm reported an income of P1.82 billion for January, followed by P1.67 billion in February before hitting a high of P1.92 billion last March.

Pagcor's compounded annual growth rate rose to 15.10 percent over the past 17 years, from 1987 to 2003. Likewise, its average monthly income jumped to P1.7 billion from P1.3 billion before the Genuino administration took over.

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Manila Polo	-	2,300,000
Makati Sports Club	200,000	Pls. Call
Metropolitan Club A/B*	-	90,000/100,000*
Mimosa C2/C3*	220,000	280,000*
Mimosa Golf Ind.	180,000	120,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	120,000/160,000*/180,000**	-
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Property sector sees 4% growth

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PROPERTY sector is expected to maintain a 4-percent growth this year despite uncertainties brought about by the election season, a property developer said.

Victor H. Manarang, president of One Asia Development Corp., said the slowing down of the manufacturing sector was being balanced off by the robust performance of the services sector.

Manarang said that, in turn, the services sector was being further propped up by election spending.

"The low-cost and middle-range market housing sector will continue to grow at 3 to 4 percent overall with its increasing access to home financing," he said.

"Socialized housing also has enough room for bigger growth this year because funds are being made available for such projects," he added.

Manarang said that the high-end sector had shown signs of recovery from the glut of the late 1990s, which saw a huge inventory of high-end projects that the market could not absorb.

"For the past two years, the market has slowly but surely been absorbing whatever excess supply of high-rise projects and high-end condominium units were left from 1996 onwards and new projects are now being started by developers like us," he said.

The official said 70 to 80 percent of the government's funding for housing project was going to socialized and low-cost housing developments while 20 to 30 percent was for middle housing projects.

He said that regardless of who would take over the administration after the May elections, the real concern for developers was whether the next president would give as much, if not greater, importance and resources to housing development.

The One Asia chief further said that demand in the medium and high-end categories would always be based on buyers' perception of peace and stability and their confidence in investing on such projects.

Organized in July 2000, One Asia is the developer of The Celebrity Place—a P 1-billion townhouse and walk-up condominium project in Diliman, Quezon City.

GG & A Club Shares

SEC License Broker #007575 * As of April 19, 2004

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,000,000	1,200,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,300,000
Baguio Country Club	600,000	650,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Camp John Hay	-	220,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Canyonwoods	-	180,000
Capitol Hills	125,000	150,000
Cebu Country Club	1,100,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	-	170,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	220,000	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	280,000	350,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	350,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	240,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,500,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	2,300,000	2,500,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	300,000	430,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	550,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	400,000
Metroclub "A"	115,000	-
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	150,000	Please Call
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	400,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	150,000	200,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	240,000	275,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	300,000
Quezon City Sports Club	-	200,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Spa & Lodge	550,000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,175,000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,400,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	800,000
Tagaytay Midlands	600,000	670,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	150,000
Valley Golf	230,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	6,700,000

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Capitol Hills	-	180,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	165,000
Eagleridge "A"	-	270,000
Evercrest "Indv."	-	70,000
Fairways & Blue Water "C1"	-	320,000
Fontana "D"	-	70,000
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	170,000
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	210,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	250,00
Orchard "A"	-	165,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	-
Riviera "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell Club		320,000
Royale Tagaytay	-	70,000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	700,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	350,000
Valle Verde	-	130,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,400,000	-

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 16, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17	16.75	17	13,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	45.5	44.5	45	537,900
China Banking Corp.	670	675	670	675	340
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	40	39.5	40	5,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	80,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	23.75	24.25	23.75	24.25	328,800
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	6,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2065	2065	2065	2065	560
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	21.5	22	21.5	22	17,600
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	380,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	860	860	850	855	23,210
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	125,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.035	1,200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	20,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.7	3,200,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1050	1050	1045	1045	47,830
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	61,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	27,500
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	28	26.5	28	577,200
Petron Corp.	2.9	3.05	2.9	3.05	1,363,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.99	0.9	0.99	210,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	198,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	250,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	2,842,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29	29	29	29	100,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	196,000
RFM Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	56.5	57	51,400
San Miguel Corp. B	70.5	72	70.5	72	37,000
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	22,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	450,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.3	5.5	5.3	5.4	6,154,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	136,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	60,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	4,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.53	9,660,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.12	160,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	20,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.022	0.024	0.022	0.024	600,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	22.25	22.75	22.25	22.75	294,300
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	500,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	20,000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	320,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	1,300,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	390,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	12,800,000
SPI Technologies Inc	15	15	15	15	47,100
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	5,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	40,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	22	22	22	22	82,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	19,900
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	13,729,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	50,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	390,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1	26,834,000
Fil-Estate Land. Inc.	0.185	0.205	0.185	0.205	940,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.09	26,000,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.9	5.6	5.9	1,309,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	240,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	170,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.003	0.0028	0.003	12,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	8,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.17	60,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	20,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	600,000

Weak trading seen . . .

From page B0

borrowing costs of companies and eventually affect their income results.

The Department of Finance said the budget deficit in March fell by 20 percent to P22.28 billion, or within the government's target.

Despite a collection shortfall by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) in March, the deficit was down to P56.85 billion in the first three months against a target of P58.9 billion.

The government is pitching to keep its shortfall this year at P197.8 billion from P199.9 billion last year.

Market players are also watching the budget deficit due to worries the government might spend more ahead of the May 10 national elections.

With little to drive the market up, the benchmark Philippine Composite Index slid 1.23 percent or 18.7 points to 1,498.11 last week.

"Investors were lethargic as they came back from a long weekend. Trading in the local equities market was mixed although turnover was fairly active," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

Vistan said the good news was that the country's political risk premium was slowly abating, after the latest Pulse Asia survey showing President Macapagal-Arroyo leading the presidential race.

"Investors appear to favor a GMA presidency as they prefer continuity and less uncertainties. GMA's chances have also been enhanced by presidential candidate Raul Roco's announcement to withdraw from the campaign trail to seek medical treatment in the US for lower back pains. If Roco slips from the race, it is likely that his votes from the young voters and the women will go to GMA," Vistan wrote in his weekly report.

He said corporate earnings and stock price valuations would continue to dictate the market's fate.

"Companies are expected meet or exceed expectations, raising our hopes that the market's going to go higher. We've got some concerns on the elections and higher interest rates, but we don't see an immediate threat of a hike within the first half of the year. Besides, a looming rise in interest rates has been priced into the market for some time now. Notwithstanding, caution is still the way to go, albeit to a lesser extent. We are getting closer to the climax of the political season and many things can still happen. In view thereof, we are still averse on politically sensitive issues. We still prefer big cap stocks with longer-term earnings growth," he said.

Among the major companies expected to hold their stockholders' meetings this week are San Miguel Corp. and the SM Group of companies. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

High court junks . . .

From page B3

RBSM and filed criminal charges against Principio after uncovering alleged anomalies in the rural bank's operations.

In turn, these BSP officials were accused of violating standards of professionalism in "brokering" the sale of RBSM to a new investor and using its financial condition as the subject of a case study in one of the seminars held at the BSP.

Still pending in the lower courts, however, are the BSP's own charges that RBSM and Soriano had allegedly engaged in ficticious lending, violated lending limits to directors, officers and related interests (Dosri) and malversed some of the P400 million in emergency loans extended by the BSP.

In this ruling favoring the banking regulator, the SC declared that "the BSP is an independent body corporate bestowed under its charter with fiscal and administrative autonomy."

"Officials should be granted a certain degree of flexibility in the performance of their duties and provided insulation from interference and vexatious suits, especially when moves of the kind are resorted to as counterfoil to the exercise of their regulatory mandate. Elsewise, the institutional independence and autonomy of the BSP as the central monetary authority would be rendered illusory," the ruling explained.

The decision was promulgated last Feb. 27 by the special second division which included Associate Justices Reynato Puno, Leonardo Quisumbing, Ma. Alicia Austria Martinez, Romeo Callejo, Sr. and Dante Tinga, who wrote the resolution.

SPV perks for steel firm creditors OKd

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas allowed creditors of National Steel Corp., which struck a landmark P13.79-billion asset sale deal with an Indian firm, to avail themselves of the perks provided by the special purpose vehicle law.

The transaction between Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd., a unit of the Mittal family's Ispat Industries Ltd., and creditors led by the Philippine National Bank was so far the single biggest SPV deal in the Philippines since the SPV law was passed in 2002.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board had approved the request of a group of secured creditor-banks and non-bank financial institutions for fiscal incentives under the SPV Law in its regular meeting Thursday.

One of the incentives that the banks can avail themselves of is the 10-year staggered booking of losses they incurred from the sale of the assets.

"This should be a good test in proving how the SPV Law can really be an effective means of containing one of the fundamental concerns of the local banking industry," Buenaventura said.

"We're happy to see this landmark transaction finally coming through," he said.

The BSP hopes that the unique structure of the P13.79-billion SPV deal for NSC will serve as a model for other creditor-consortia seeking to unload their assets.

Excluding non-bank creditors, the banking system's total exposure to NSC stood at P12.65 billion. There are a total of 18 parties represented in the selling consortium, composed of 13 local banks, one foreign bank, one trustee in behalf of long-term commercial paper holders, one investment house and two government agencies.

Insurers seek solution to customs bonds issue

INSURANCE companies are pushing for the adoption of guidelines to resolve the perennial issue of reconciliation and liquidation of accounts for surety firms related to customs bonds.

The Insurance and Surety Association of the Philippines (Isap), a group of 80 big and small insurance companies, said the guidelines would settle the dispute over the liabilities and insurance companies.

Isap has been pushing for such guidelines over the past 10 years, with Isap, together with the Philippine Association of Surety Underwriters (Philassurers), submitting its proposed guidelines to the Bureau of Customs, through the Insurance Commission. But the BOC has yet to act on the proposal, Isap said.

The proposed guidelines cover the reconciliation and liquidation of accounts of surety companies and their principals, and the proposed interim rules for the accreditation of surety companies.

The guidelines are intended to amend Customs Memorandum Order No. 129-88 dated Sept. 29, 1988.

"The fact is, we've been trying to work out something with the Bureau of Customs, but nothing has come out of it. Now, insurance companies are being accused of connivance allegedly so they can avoid paying the liabilities," Honorio Ramajo, Isap's immediate past president, said.

Ramajo said the insurance industry has, in fact, been pursuing efforts to minimize, if not totally eradicate, the problem of unliquidated or uncanceled customs bonds.

Among the objectives of the proposed guidelines are to determine what accounts in the list of due and demandable bonds are truly due and demandable, and to find out the correct amount of liability of surety companies or bond principals under each bond.

The passion of the moviegoer

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

AS PENANCE, I went to see "The Passion of The Christ" last Palm Sunday. I had read the reviews, and I wanted to see for myself what kind of a movie Mel Gibson had made.

Consider Gibson's problem when planning the movie. He could not make a suspense thriller. The story is 2,000 years old. The movie had to be a tragedy but everybody knows how the hero dies a horrible death in the end.

Besides, there have been earlier versions. A long, long time ago, I saw Cecil B. de Mille's silent epic, "King of Kings." I thought then that H.B. Warner was too frail for the title role. Then, as part of Hollywood's counteroffensive to draw back the fans from TV in the 1960s, Darryl F. Zanuck produced "The Greatest Story Ever Told" in Technicolor and Cinemascope. Jeffrey Hunter's suffering on a wall-to-wall screen overwhelmed you. Finally, there was "Jesus of Nazareth" featuring Robert Powell's crisp British accent. I missed the rock musical, "Jesus Christ Superstar," because I thought it was irreverent.

Gibson solved his problem brilliantly. Those earlier versions depicted the life of Jesus from the Nativity to the Crucifixion. Gibson focused on The Passion, the last 12 hours of Jesus, with some flashbacks, notably the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper in the Upper Room.

The opening scene, the Agony in the Garden, sets the tone of the movie. In the dark, Jesus sweats blood knowing what is in store for him, but accepts His Father's will. Having accepted his fate, he never fights back throughout The Passion. Mary, too, accepted God's will. Watching in horror the suffering of her only son, not one word of complaint escapes her lips.

In the previous versions, the arrest was almost polite. Jesus was merely taken away. In The Passion, Jesus is brutalized from the start. By the time he was turned over to the Romans, he was already black and blue.

In the previous versions, Jesus looked heavenward in about every other scene. In The Passion, Jesus looked up only twice, in Gethsemane and at the Fifth Word. At the pillar when Jesus prayed to the Father that his soul was ready, and throughout the scourging, which took almost 10 minutes, he never looked heavenward. The Father was in him and he was in the Father.

The old versions were sanitized. In The Passion, blood was all over the place. I can understand when people complain about the violence. But my housemaid asked, "Was it really that cruel?" I am sure it was. This was two centuries before the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. Rome ruled the world. Jerusalem was the easternmost outpost. The Jews had been troublesome for years.

Gibson is correct in depicting Jesus all bloody at the Crucifixion. After the scourging, Jesus was minced meat. Now I realize that a crucifix presenting Jesus with hardly a scratch on him is inaccurate. Even Michelangelo was wrong when he sculpted Jesus in the Pieta as totally unscathed except for the wound on the right side.

Gibson has been accused of anti-Semitism. I disagree. The role of the Jews in the movie has biblical basis. The Sanhedrin, headed by Caiaphas, plotted everything and pressured Pilate. The crowd that wanted Jesus crucified was Jewish. These historical facts cannot be changed. But there is no place for anti-Semitism today or at any time in history.

Gibson has made the definitive work on The Passion. There will never be another one like it.

Gov't to adopt uniform 1% duty on capital equipment

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MALACAÑANG is expected to issue an executive order that would bring down the duties imposed on imported capital equipment, according to the Board of Investments.

BOI officer in charge Elmer Hernandez said the new EO would level duties on machinery to a uniform one percent.

Companies that heavily rely on mechanical equipment have been clamoring for the restoration of tax and duty exemption that they used to enjoy.

Hernandez said current duties imposed on capital equipment range from one to 10 percent.

He said Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima had been pushing for the issuance of the order before the May elections.

"Practically all BOI-registered companies are seeking the restoration of incentives on capital equipment," the official said.

Such enterprises have not enjoyed duty-free and tax-free importation of equipment and accompanying spare parts necessary for their operations for more than three years now.

Full exemption on taxes and duties on imported machinery was provided under Executive Order No. 226 or the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987.

The exemption was scheduled to expire in 1992 but was extended several times, with the last finally ending on Dec. 31, 1999.

Hernandez said the government had been pushing for the full restoration of the incentives through legislation, but the Senate failed to act on the matter.

"The order, which could only touch duties but not taxes, would also be an answer to a House resolution urging the President to act on the matter," he said.

The President is given such power through Sections 401 and 402 of the Tariff and Customs Code, he added.

On the matter of incentives on locally produced capital equipment, Hernandez said the issue involved the taxation process, which meant any move would have to come from Congress.

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ASIAN BOND FUND INITIATIVE

Asean officials work out free equities market perks

By Doris C. Dumlao

BUILDING on the gains of the Asian Bond Fund initiative, finance officials of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries are working out a new strategy to perk up the region's equities markets.

Philippine Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong, who attended a recent Asean Finance Ministers Meeting (AFMM) in Singapore, said the group was focusing on fresh initiatives for the equities market this time.

Amatong said that the group has yet to identify specific initiatives. But she explained that their goal is to provide the regulatory framework that will allow cross-border listing of blue chips from different markets.

"It's the first time that we're talking about it," Amatong said.

For instance, she said, the country's own Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. may be listed in other Asean markets to widen its investor base.

PLDT's American Depository Receipts are now listed in the New York Stock Exchange.

Amatong said that the markets in the region will have to address a wide array of tax and regulatory issues to help jump-start this vision for a cross-border listing of equities.

She said the groundwork should be done by the exchanges themselves. The regulators, on the other hand, would create an enabling environment for it.

Another possibility, according to Amatong, is the establishment of a regional fund that will invest in Asian equities, similar to the Asian Bond Fund which invests in Asian bond markets.

She said further development of stock markets still comprised part of the ongoing regional cooperation to boost the capital market and make use of a portion of the region's huge foreign reserves.

Instead of the funds being invested elsewhere, Amatong said that the foreign reserves could stay within the region if the capital markets offered enough opportunities.

Ten months ago, 11 central banks in the Asia-Pacific region launched the landmark $1-billion Asian Bond Fund, which is now fully invested in US dollar-denominated bonds issued by sovereign and quasi-sovereign entities in member-economies.

Underway is the second ABF project or ABF2, likewise an initiative of the Executives' Meeting of East Asia and Pacific Central Banks, which shall be invested in local currency-denominated bonds issued by sovereign and quasi-sovereign issuers.

AFMM supports this initiative to develop efficient and liquid bond markets in Asia to better utilize Asian savings for Asian investments.

Gov't mulls over incentives for GSII

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT is looking at ways to provide more investment incentives to Global Steelworks International Inc., formerly the National Steel Corp.

According to an industry source familiar with the matter, GSII was not entitled to incentives from the Board of Investments.

"To be qualified for [BOI] incentives, a business needs to be export-oriented which Global Steelworks is not," the source said in an interview.

This is despite government policies that favor giving perks to the country's only upstream iron and steel business.

Last month, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority granted a new economic zone export enterprise status to the Iligan City-based GSII.

GSII president Vijay M. Jhanji said earlier that the company's new status meant it was exempt from paying duties and the 10-percent value added tax imposed on imported steel slabs and hot-rolled steel coils.

Jhanji also said that GSII, which restarted the steel facility in Iligan City last February, would not be able to export a significant amount of its output in the next few years.

Peza requirements provide that investors must export at least 70 percent of output.

Last week, the industry source said that given the case, the Peza incentives only provides GSII with some savings. It will still have to pay the necessary dues when it sells its products to local downstream steel firms.

In a related development, the Board of Investments excluded downstream iron and steel products from the list of businesses given incentives under the 2004 Investment Priorities Plan.

According to the BOI, the move meant to encourage the upstream sector which is covered under mandatory inclusion to the IPP as provided under Republic Act No. 7103 of 1991.

The law seeks to strengthen the local iron and steel industry and promote the country's industrialization.

RA 7103 defines the upstream sector as those industries that produce and/or process raw material—such as iron ore, coke, limestones and silica—for the manufacture of semi-finished products.

On the other hand, the downstream iron and steel sector are industries that process semi-finished products for the manufacture of finished products, or industries that use the finished products.

Semi-finished products include ingots, slabs or blooms/billets while finished products include hot-rolled coils and strips, plates and sheets.

Section 6 of the law states that enterprises certified by the BOI would be entitled to generate their own electricity; financing through official development assistance; tax and duty exemption on imported equipment; tax credit on domestic capital equipment and rational tariff incentives and protection.

BOI data show that included for IPP incentives were primary steel products in the form of refined iron ore and semi-finished products; and intermediate steel products such as plates, hot-rolled flat products (for use in galvanized iron sheets, automotive and appliances) or their equivalents and tin plates.

Aklan power firm cuts systems losses to 12%

By Abigail L. Ho

THE AKLAN Electric Cooperative (Akelco) has boosted its efficiency, reducing its systems loss to 12.46 percent as of February.

Systems loss refers to electricity lost during transmission or due to pilferage.

The power utility two years ago drew flak from resort owners in the island of Boracay for a series of power outages.

Akelco's reduction in systems loss from a record high of 23 percent in 2001 has enabled the power distributor to pay off most of its debts to the state-run National Power Corp.

Earlier, Napocor cut off power service in Aklan two years ago, from March 18-20, after Akelco failed to remit its P153-million obligation to the state firm.

The three-day blackout affected Aklan's 17 towns, including Boracay Island, and the municipalities of Libertad and Pandan in Antique. Power was restored on March 20 after a National Electrification Administration management panel took over operations of the electric cooperative.

The takeover was in response to a clamor from Boracay residents and business owners for corruption-free management of the utility.

But the brownouts persisted, until new management took over, with current Akelco general manager Erico Bucoy at the helm.

By June 2003, the cooperative was able to bring down its systems loss from a high of 23 percent in 2001 to 14.97 percent. This went down further to 14.93 percent by end-2003.

Bucoy said the reduction in Akelco's systems losses allowed it to reverse its losses as well as increase its collection efficiency to 95 percent.

ABN-Amro offers insurance facility for small farmers

DUTCH investment bank ABN-Amro has offered a weather risk insurance facility to the Philippine agriculture sector, which would help protect Filipino farmers against crop failure and make them more credit-worthy.

Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. said in a press conference last Friday that the agriculture and finance departments would study the proposal further to see how it would work with the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.

The PCIC is a government-owned and controlled company tasked to shield farmers from the adverse effects of natural calamities by providing crop insurance facilities.

The Global Weather Risk Facility is managed by the International Finance Corp., the private sector investment arm of the World Bank.

ABN-Amro is one of IFC's financial intermediaries that market the GWRF internationally.

The PCIC has run into financial difficulties due to government budget constraints. A study by the Asian Institute of Management indicated that the PCIC is better off doing reinsurance and allowing the private sector to handle marketing operations.

On the other hand, IFC's GWRF project will provide an innovative insurance product and a needed hedging instrument for emerging markets such as the Philippines, where the weather-beaten agriculture sector comprise a third of domestic production.

IFC said in a presentation that the proposed insurance mechanism would help farmers manage their crop failure risk and make them more credit-worthy.

Inspired by a World Bank feasibility study for weather index insurance in Morocco, IFC expanded the concept into a weather hedging company in Morocco. The same provisions would be applied to cater to emerging markets' needs. *Christine A. Gaylican*

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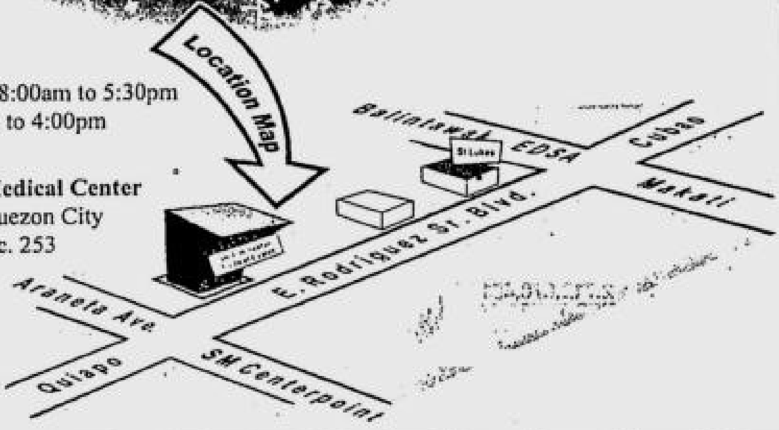

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FREE TRADE PACT

RP to revive early harvest program talks with China

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES will revive talks with China to be included in the so-called early harvest program, part of a free trade package which China forged with other Southeast Asian nations, according to the Department of Agriculture.

"We are afraid that Philippine bananas and coconut will be left out," Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. yesterday said during a press conference. "We were chided by the new Chinese ambassador (to the World Trade Organization) that we are the only Asean member country that has not joined the early harvest program."

Lorenzo said after he met with the Chinese ambassador, the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry have decided to revive its option to be part of the Asean-China Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation.

Lorenzo said that since the early harvest program started in March 2003, Philippine agriculture products, particularly coconut products, have been left out of the huge China market by produce coming from other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Lorenzo explained that getting advanced access to the mainland—with a market of over 1.35 billion—offers a huge potential for Philippine products. But he added that the list of RP produce must include vegetable products, pork and chicken, rice and corn.

Earlier, the Cabinet-level Tariff and Related Matters Committee voted to reject the Philippines' entry to the early harvest program because of China's insistence on limiting the products to unprocessed agricultural produce, as contained in Chapters 1 to 8 of its tariff code.

The Philippines, which was supposed to submit last March its list of products for inclusion in the program, would continue to negotiate with China.

The early harvest program meant to provide Asean members advanced entry to China, which generally had higher tariff rates than the Asean, before the start of the free trade agreement. But China had insisted on full reciprocity, or getting the same tariff perks, in the Asean market.

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Metro Rail expects QC mall by '06

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

METRO Rail Transit Development Co. officials expect to complete the development of a mall at its station in North Triangle, Quezon City by 2006.

Fil-Estate Land Inc. senior vice-president Rafael de Tagle Jr. said that in June, the MRT Consortium would award a general contract for a 45-year lease on the project to one of three major bidders.

The consortium earlier allowed Landmark, a department store at the Ayala Center, to operate on 90 square meters of the project.

Ayala Land Inc., the project manager for the North Triangle mall, has said it hoped to break ground on the 200,000 square meter North Triangle commercial center in Quezon City this year.

The project is estimated to cost P5 billion of which, P1.6 billion was invested by the Fil-estate Group. The rest of the project cost would be funded through equity infusion and construction loans.

Fil-estate holds a 30 percent interest in the project. Fil-Estate, ALI and Anglo Philippine Holdings Corp. make up the consortium.

In a related development, credit rating firm Philippine Rating Services Corp. said it continues to review the PRS Aa rating for the MRT III Funding Corp. Ltd.'s asset-backed securities.

A rating of PRS Aa means margins of protection may not be as large as in PRS Aaa-rated issues, and there are elements that may make the long-term risks appear somewhat larger.

PRS Aaa-rated securities, on the other hand, are those with the smallest degree of investment risk.

On April 2, a repayment and restructuring agreement was signed between the Department of Transportation and Communications, Sumitomo Corp., and the MRTC on past due maintenance fees payable to Sumitomo.

A copy was sent to PhilRatings by Penta-Capital Investment Corp., the lead manager for the proposed ABS issuance.

Under the agreement, DOTC acknowledges its obligation to pay US$ 21.5 million in overdue maintenance fees. Payment of about US$ 10 million in escalation fees and value added taxes is still being negotiated.

The MRT Consortium hopes to tap fresh funding from the debt market through a secondary public offering of at least $300 million worth of bonds.

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(As of March 23, 2004)

		AMOUNT
ASSETS		
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	P	156,373,508
Due from Other Banks		848,747,221
Trading Account Securities – net		1,641,014,253
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments – net		3,463,519,084
Loans, Discounts & Advances – net		152,995,620
Equity Investments		5,500,100
Bank Premises, Furniture Fixtures & Equipment – net		19,876,295
Real and Other Properties Owned/Acquired – net		17,176,250
Other Assets		258,216,381
TOTAL ASSETS	P	6,563,418,712
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	782,575,774
Time Deposits		984,163,662
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas		1,673,862
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		2,185,276
Bills Payable		
Interbank Borrowings		1,184,652,000
Others		729,034,009
Other Liabilities		166,455,678
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	3,850,740,261
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock	P	1,850,000,000
Capital Stock Deposit		315,000,000
Surplus		547,364,255
Other Capital Accounts		314,196
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	2,712,678,451
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	6,563,418,712
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	P	5,963,540,073
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		5,975,207,080
Items Held for Safekeeping/Collaterals		6,715,899,487
Items Held in Trust		83,105,162
Other Contingent Accounts		6,393,262,087
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	25.131.013.889

OTHER INFORMATION*
Compliance with Magna Carta Law:

Prescribed Ratio of Compliance	6% for Small Enterprises	2% for Medium Enterprises
Actual Compliance	6.21%	2.61%

Amount of Non-Performing Loans	P	-
Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		0.0%
Amount of Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets	P	-
General provision for loan losses	P	16,289,671
Specific provision for loan losses	P	-
Return on Equity (ROE) (4.44% before extraordinary charges**)		-.42%
Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	P	19,223,287
Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio		1.64%
Amount of Past Due DOSRI loans/advances	P	-
Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/adv to total loan portfolio		-

* Amended to conform with Circular No. 208 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to all Banks dated November 29, 1999.
** Based on net income for the year as adjusted for extraordinary charges.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI)S.S

We, **Josefina N. Tan** and **Agnes B. Santos** of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) AGNES B. SANTOS
Financial Controller

(Sgd.) JOSEFINA N. TAN
Acting President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 12th day of April 2004 affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 14241084, issued at Mandaluyong City on March 16, 2004 and Resident Certificate No. 22295905 issued at Pasig City on February 12, 2004, respectively.

(Sgd) Ma. Carmen A. Oreña
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2005
PTR No. 7013011 A
Date Issued : January 5, 2004
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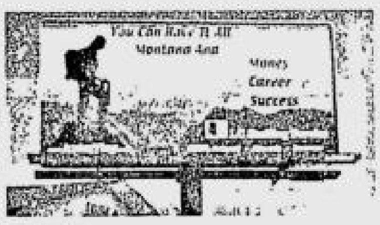
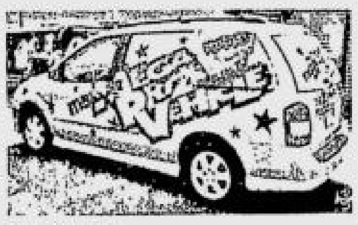

Billboards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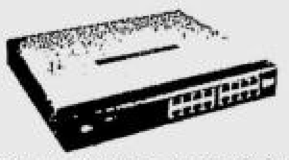
16/24-Ports 10/100 Rackmount Switch (SR216/SR224)

Features
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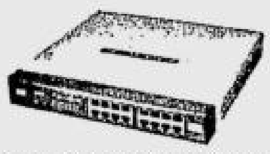
- Runs at non-blocking, full wire speeds up to 200Mbps
- Address Learning and Data Flow Control for transmission reliability
- Suitable for both desktop or rackmount installations


16/24-Ports 10/100/1000 Rackmount Gigabit Switch (SR2016/SR2024)

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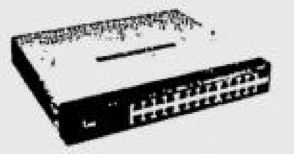
- All ports have auto speed negotiation and auto MDI/MDI-X crossover detection
- Limited lifetime warranty


24-Port 10/100 + 1-Port Gigabit Switch + 1 MiniGBIC (SR224G)

Features
- 24 autosensing 10/100 full duplex, auto MDI/MDI-X ports
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- Address Learning and Data Flow Control for transmission reliability
- Limited lifetime warranty

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Godiva goes global

"THE FILIPINO can innovate."

This was expressed by Fred Reyes, president of Godiva Inc, recipient of the 1st Information Technology Excellence Award given by the Philippine Internet Commerce Society.

Since her first made the daring plunge into the cutthroat world of business in late 1996, chemist-turned entrepreneur Fred Reyes has relied on a knack for seeing what has potential in the marketplace, coupled with hard work and unrelenting drive to make things happen.

Through sheer persistence, a good product backed by customer service and market positioning, Godiva has firmly established itself as a quality skin care line. It actually pioneered the use of licorice extract in its skin whitening line. In 2003, a couple of years since it launched its online store and grown into an e-commerce powerhouse with thousands of clients spanning continents, Godiva's sales skyrocketed, attesting to the worldwide consumer confidence it has gained in such a short span of time.

Indeed, many companies now are realizing that e-commerce can serve as the significant vehicle by which to expand business both at the homefront and in foreign shores. As far as Godiva is concerned, setting up corporate and e-commerce websites are but among the various strategies the company has implemented for competitive advantage.

Emerging as a byword in American, European and Asian skin whitening markets did not happen overnight. Back when it was still an upstart, Godiva had to contend with distributors who considered it a risky proposition, but Godiva plodded on and cultivated a critical mass of satisfied clientele-both through the traditional and non-traditional routes.

Putting the online business system in place entailed rather tedious work at the start, but the investment of time, energy and dedication had paid off handsomely. "We learned a lot from our international customers," Reyes said.

The Godiva website went live in 2001, eventually serving as a full e-commerce site where visitors can post orders or express comments like product satisfaction. Godiva's online marketing strategy was made possible with the virtual community SME.com.ph established and maintained by Planters Development Bank in support of Philippine-based small and medium enterprises. In 2003, Godiva e-commerce and corporate communications manager Jonathan Cristobal noted, "Every month was a record-breaking month, in terms of online store sales and in terms of geographical sales reach. Export sales accounted last year for 10 to 12 percent of overall sales, and the target for 2004 is to chalk in 20 percent." Godiva's online store www.i-godiva.com, which offers all of the company's products from its flagship licorice-based whitening soaps, deodorants and creams to anti-acne products, lets the company compete with popular multinational brands.

Godiva gets clients mostly from the United States, some from Canada, Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Thailand, Pakistan, Singapore. It has an exclusive distributor in Indonesia, and authorized distributors with mail-order firms in Japan and Hong Kong.

As an exemplar of success, Godiva acknowledges that indeed, there is real advantage with automation of online store operations and e-commerce, enabling it to tap lucrative foreign markets. Godiva's distinct edge over its more established competitors: providing customer service (set to world-class standards) with a human face.

The IT award bespeaks the dynamism of a local skin care firm that knows fully well that to continue forging ahead, one must be able to deliver continuous product and service excellence. "We are serving an unsaturated market where efficient service and product delivery are crucial," Cristobal said.

Establishing Godiva Natural Skin Care as a prestigious global brand of choice is a real feat, and the future holds greater promise. Godiva is not about to balk from the bigger challenges, like establishing a stronger market foothold and expansion overseas.

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NESCAFE HAKOT PAMASKO WINNER

Vicente A. Abad, the P4-million grand draw winner of the Nescafe Hakot Pamasko Promo, is shown with family and Nestle officials. From left are Lester Castillo, brand events assistant, Sheila Imperial, brand events specialist, Vicente's wife, grandson, daughter, and granddaughter, Jackby Jaime, promotions procurement specialist and Manolet Anchores, promotions procurement specialist.

Viaje travel insurance launched

FORTUNE Guarantee and Insurance Corp, in cooperation with Innovation Marketing Solutions Inc, a loyalty management and insurance product development company, recently launched the pre-paid travel insurance called Viaje, a first in the Philippines.

The insurance card comes in a plastic packet containing the card and the printed certificate of insurance (COI).

There are three different card types, depending on the duration of the insurance coverage. These are the 3-day Viaje, 7-day Viaje and 30-day Viaje cards.

All cards carry a P100,000 insurance coverage against the misfortunes of accidents during their travel. However, the buyer is allowed to increase the coverage to a maximum of P500,000 by simply buying and activating more cards.

Activating the insurance is as easy as 1-2-3. The buyer simply scratches the back of the card to reveal the card PIN number. He or she then texts his or her personal details to an access number provided at the back of the card. He then signs the policy, which is enclosed in the packet. He is already covered with the insurance. It's as easy as scratch, text and sign.

The text service is provided by reputable SMS gateways. Wireless Services Asia (WSA) handles the SMS from the Viaje buyer who uses Globe or Touch Mobile phones. I-Con, as sister company of Smart, on the other hand, handles the Smart and Talk N' Text service.

Both gateways provide value to the back-end system of the Viaje Travel Insurance Cards. Such value-added services include notification of expiring insurance coverage three hours prior to expiry, a help menu for a listing of all available keywords, a listing of all claims documents needed and contact numbers of the insurance company-all of these by just typing in some keywords.

The Viaje Travel insurance cards are available in telecommunications shops selling prepaid load, at stores in and around bus terminals, piers and airports, your favorite travel agency or from your Fortune Guarantee Insurance agents.

Viaje cards cost P20 for the 3-day card, P50 for the 7-day and P100 for the 30-day card. They are perfect for out-of-town travel, outings, excursions or official business trips here and abroad. What's more, parents can insure their children by activating the cards in behalf of their children, through the Pasa-Insurance feature of Viaje, which is a take-off from the "pasa-load" or pass-on load popularized by cell phone companies.

So next time you find yourself going on a viaje, make sure you pick up a Viaje Travel Insurance card before you make that viaje.

PMA INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS

Philippine Marketing Association president Joselito Ortega (left) inducts into office the new members of the organization during its general membership meeting held alongside the 2004 Agora Youth Awards. They are (from left) Raoul Francisco Sia, VP of Asia College of Science and Technology, Esther Baldemor, marketing manager of Festive Foods International Inc, Ferdinand Frejas, managing partner of Goodthinking Research Inc, Norelyn Babiera of Fiera de Manila Inc, Percival Pastrana, process department executive of Unilever Philippines, and Ricardo Samaniego, commissioner/director-Office of the President Edsa People Power Coalition and Department of Agriculture. The PMA is a member of the Asia Pacific Marketing Federation and World Marketing Association. Through its theme this year of 'Marketing Renaissance', it will assume thought leadership in the marketing field.

MARKER HONORS ABS-CBN

A historical marker honoring ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp for the first broadcast in Philippine television history was unveiled recently at the main entrance of the ABS-CBN Broadcast Center along Sgt. Esguerra Avenue (formerly Bohol Avenue) in Quezon City. Shown is ABS-CBN chair and CEO Eugenio Lopez III and National Historical Institute (NHI executive director Ludovico Badoy during the unveiling of the historical marker. During a ceremony, Lopez thanked NHI for the honor given to the network.

Tough firms edge out rivals

SPEAKERS in the 25th National Conference of Employers (NCE) will share first-hand accounts of how successful management creates and sustains an advantage over global competitors by fostering and nourishing long-term relationships or "social partnerships" with employees, community and national leaders, industry peers, distribution channels, customers and suppliers.

This was announced recently by Rene Y. Soriano, president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop). The NCE is the annual forum of employers for advocating public policies affecting harmonious labor-management relations.

Some 1,000 business executives are participating in the 25th NCE (ecopnce25@yahoo.com) on April 21 and 22, at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel. The conference theme is "Forging a Winning Social Partnership for Global Competitiveness". Interested parties may call ECOP at 896-82-78 or 890-65-13.

The conference has five plenary sessions.

Conference participants will draft resolutions on social partnership to be presented to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Summer fun at Camp Storyland

LEARNING IS fun-tastic-and so much more at Camp Storyland, which packs in cool activities and loads of treats for its members at Storyland, the country's most exciting indoor theme park.

Kids can hone in their artistic talents, athletic skills, and even their survivor instincts in this six-day camp specially prepared for them. Day One begins at Storyland SM Southmall with cool fun with ice skating lessons at the SM Ice Skating Rink. Kids, meanwhile, at Storyland SM City Fairview will get bowled over with bowling basics at the SM Bowling Center.

Kids can strut their stuff and learn the hippest dance moves on Day Two with Street Dancing 101.

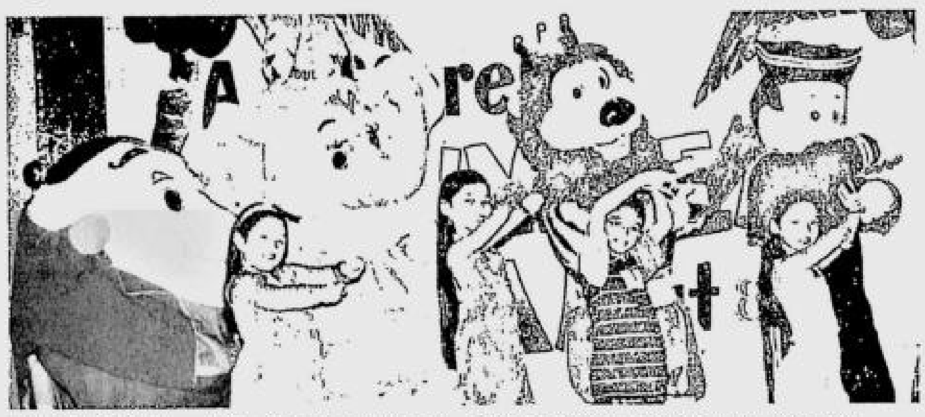
On Day Three, it's off to Nissan Motors in Laguna for a field trip filled with loads of fun, bonding, and adventure. There, they learn to test their survivor skills with camping, first aid essentials, pitching a tent, techniques on how to find their way when lost, and other ways to brave the great outdoors.

The following days tap into their artistic skills where they learn Acting 101 on Day Four and Arts and Crafts 101 on Day Five.

Day Six is Graduation Day wherein they get to share their cool experiences and receive surprise gifts.

Camp Storyland workshops will be held from April 19 to 24 at Storyland SM Southmall and from April 26 to May 1 at Storyland SM City Fairview.

Kids can register at the Club Storyland office. For inquiries, call Storyland in SM Southmall at 800-0614 and SM City Fairview at 936-0508.



THE DELIGHTFUL cast of the 'Storyland' TV show Katrina Michelle Legaspi, Philippian Trisha Rilles, Karl and Karlyn Carpina and Storyland's lovable Ellie the Elephant, Lionel the Lion King, Sgt. March and Eggbert strut their stuff in Camp Storyland's Dancing 101.

SAMSUNG PHONE BUYER DRIVES HOME BMW

A black sapphire BMW 318i was handed over to Joseph Pua (center) at the Samsung Electronics Philippine Corp (Sepco) head office in San Juan. Pua, a businessman from Tagkawayan, Quezon, bought a Samsung SGH-E700. His name was picked among hundreds of entries in a raffle draw held recently at the Sepco head office. The raffle was the culmination of a promo that entitled buyers of Samsung mobile phones the chance to own the sleek BMW. With Pua are Maeng Dal Bae, Sepco vice president for sales and marketing, ICT and telecom (left) and Sang Youl Eom, Sepco president and CEO.

Clips

World Baking Cup

CHEF Ruben Reyes, Dusit Hotel Nikko's chef de partie, brought pride to the hotel after he was chosen to coach the Philippine Team (composed of chefs from Makati Shangri-la, Westin Philippine Plaza and Richmond Hotel) in the qualifying round of the Asia-Pacific Regional Competition of the World Baking Cup in Singapore on April 19 and 23. Furthermore, he has been appointed as one of the members of the jury in the competition. The World Baking Cup is hosted by the Societe Industrielle Lesaffre in Paris, France every three years. Reyes has been with Dusit Hotel Nikko for over 7 years and has won several baking competitions, including the gold in sweet bread category of Culinary Classics in 1997, bronze in the showpiece competition of Les Toques Blanches in 1998, and gold in the sweet bread category of the Culinary Classics in 2000.

Magnolia Cheezee camp

LOOKING for a fun yet productive way for your kids to spend this summer? Get them started early in the kitchen. Indulge your kids with a fun, cooking adventure by enrolling them in the Magnolia Cheezee Kiddie Basics Camp. Magnolia Cheezee has tied-up Cooking Basics Culinary School, owned and managed by a group of young and creative chefs Ana Park and Melanie Cruz, who were both trained in Ecole des Rochas, a Swiss hotel management school, and Pria Solon, who had her training at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York. This camp is open to youngsters 7 to 12 years old. Module One starts April 19, 21 and 23. Second Module on May 3, 5 and 7, and the last Module on May 17, 19, and 21. Workshops will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Cooking Basics Culinary Studio. For details, call 771-0082.

World-class fashion courses

LASALLE College International (Manila), a Canadian-based fashion institute, offers a Diploma Course in Fashion Design and Fashion Marketing as well as Certificates in Fashion Buyer, Patternmaking and Styling. Present in 10 different countries, LaSalle College is the first and only fashion school in the Philippines that offers an international curriculum and a diploma that is recognized all over the world. LaSalle College follows a dynamic and modern method of learning. Under its current director, Odile Hénault, the students had the chance to join the recently concluded Fashion Week in Hong Kong where they got to observe the latest trends and styles in fashion. Likewise, they had a highly successful fashion show held in Makati City in October 2003. Enrollment is now ongoing at the ground floor, Bloomingdale Building, 205 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati. Classes start April 19. For inquiries, call 840-1543, 840-1476, 840-1498.

TeleTech.

TeleTech *Supplement*

The global leader in customer management focuses its attention on RP

THE TELETECH facility inside Building F, SM Corporate Offices in Bay City, Pasay City is an enormous 7,000 square meters of office space. A spacious customer management center (CMC), the office has the dominant colors of bright orange, green, and yellow on its walls, ceilings and floors. Glass walls abound as well as an inner courtyard that allows light and air inside the facility. Literally, an oasis in Bay City, the TeleTech office is modern, intellectually stimulating, and employee-friendly.

Every day, about a thousand employees report for work, the majority of who are customer service representatives (CSRs). They occupy hundreds of terminals equipped with state-of-the-art computers and telecommunications equipment.

These dedicated teams of professionals interact with millions of customers and clients in North America and Australia using voice, Web, email and other automated solutions. CSRs ensure customer interactions are carried out at the highest level inside the CMC.

LEADING the TeleTech facility tour during the grand opening is Garth Howard, North America oprations president shown here with Executive Secretary Alberto G. Romulo (center) and Manuel V. Pangilinan, chairman of PLDT.

Welcome to TeleTech. Its main business is integrated customer solutions. The company lists among its global client roster seven of the top 10 auto manufacturers, major health insurance providers, several well-known retail brands, and many of the world's largest financial services organizations. They rely on TeleTech to reduce costs, improve productivity and profitability, and maintain and attract more customers.

The company was founded by Kenneth Tuchman in Southern California in 1982. More than 20 years later, TeleTech has become a world leader by partnering with leading companies globally. Employing 33,000 people worldwide, it has 64 CMCs throughout North America, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America.

It established its Philippine operations in partnership with ePLDT in 2001. Located in the Fort Bonifacio Technology Center, the first Philippine CMC has 800 seats and handles several major clients.

TeleTech's new site in the Philippines is located in Building F of SM Corporate Offices in the booming Bay City area in Pasay City. The newest CMC was officially opened last March 31. It has a 1,000-seat capacity and is currently handling various clients.

Craig Reines, GM and VP for operations of TeleTech Customer Care Management Philippines, Inc. (TCCMP), is optimistic about the customer management business in the country. In fact, talks are also underway with a leading university to develop a curriculum for careers in customer management.

Reines enthusiastically adds, "Within months, TeleTech started building a reputation for excellence. Business picked up quickly when our clients began hearing positive feedback from customers who where being served from our Philippines' facility."

Reines admits TeleTech's success in the country comes from a "perfect mix" of TeleTech's strategy and Filipino talent.

"Filipinos are very service-oriented and incredibly loyal. They also have a tremendous sense of ownership in the companies they work for and in the clients they serve," says Reines.

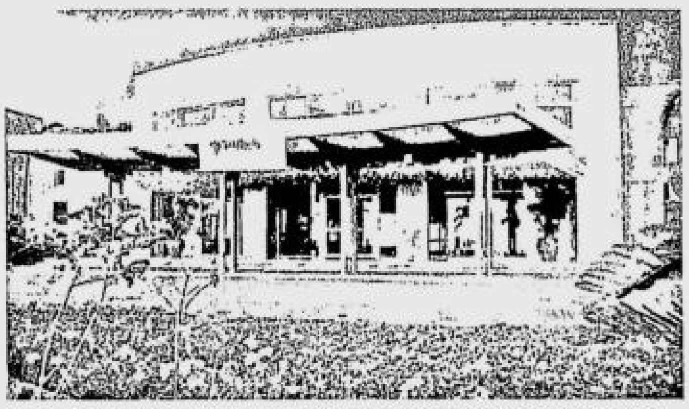
Highly Reliable and Competent Customer Service Representatives

TeleTech invests substantially in the recruitment, education, and retention of high-quality professionals. CSRs undergo a six-week comprehensive training that includes full English language comprehension, communication and listening skills through multimedia and interactive classes.

Speech experts and other training staff from abroad conduct classes inside well-equipped training rooms. From time to time, CSRs undergo refresher courses and interactive sessions in the language laboratory, a unique feature of the TeleTech facility.

The "Lifecycle" Approach to Customer Management

TeleTech prides itself in helping companies reduce costly business overhead expenses, such as substantial capital expenditures, maintenance and service costs. By working with TeleTech to manage certain business processes, companies can devote their resources to their core products and services and focus on their profitability targets.



TeleTech Customer Care Management Phils., Inc. opened its second and newest site in the Philippines in the SM Corporate Offices, Bay City area, Pasay City.

TeleTech manages the complete customer lifecycle, from the moment a customer begins their relationship with a client, to every front-office interaction and back-office transaction that follows. Every interaction with a customer at every point of the customer lifecycle is seen as an opportunity to earn a customer's trust, business and loyalty.

"Another big advantage of TeleTech is that we have a global footprint. We have selectively expanded our operations over the past two decades to support our clients' customers around the globe," says Reines.

High Technology for High Quality Service

Operating a global network requires sophisticated and state-of-the-art software and hardware that will ensure seamless and consistent service across multiple channels.

"At TeleTech, our centers are fully equipped with 24/7 multi-channel operations and we continually invest in technology to ensure the delivery of the highest quality services and operational efficiencies to our clients," says Reines.

As TeleTech navigates into the future, the company has set its sight on capturing a significant chunk of the world's $40-billion customer management industry. And the Philippines has proven to be a viable and ideal location for the company. Reines concludes, "We've made headway in the Philippines mainly because of the outstanding performance of our Filipino employees. But more than that, by expanding our operations here we want to show that the Philippines is a premier location in Asia for the customer management industry."

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AUCTION SALE

MEYCAUAYAN-FILIPINAS Pawnshop, Alw Complex, Calvario, Meyc. Bulacan. All unredeemed pledges of OCT 2003 will be auctioned on APRIL 26 8:30 am. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer.
(PDI-April 19, 2004)

NATION Pawnshop, Inc. Pob Meyc Bulacan will auction unredeemed pledges of OCT. '03 on APRIL 26, '04, 10am - *Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer*
(PDI-April 19, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given of the lost of Solidbank Corp Stock Cert Nos. 100015552 12shares, 300000242, 300014968, 300017537, 300019114, 300024061, 300025888 1share each issued to Conrado D. Oliveros. If no contest received with in 1yr., new certificate will be issued. (PDI-April 12, 19, 26, 2004)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
BUTUAN CITY WATER DISTRICT
Gov. Jose A. Rosales Avenue, Butuan City
Tel. No. (085) 342-3146 Fax No. (085) 341-5008

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Butuan City Water District hereby invites suppliers and distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid, in accordance with I.R.R. of R.A. 9184, for the supply and delivery of various Brass Filings, Water Meters and HDPE Pipes;

PACKAGE 1: BRASS FITTINGS Php 5,600,000.00

Item No.	Quantity	Items/Description
1.a	8,975 Pcs.	Angle Meter Valve, 25 mm ø x 25 mm ø
1.b	9,225 Pcs.	Coupling, 25 mm ø (ISO)
1.c	4,950 Pcs.	Coupling, 32 mm ø (ISO)
1.d	5,700 Pcs.	Corporation Stop, 32 mm ø (ISO)
1.e	3,500 Pcs.	Union, 25 mm ø (ISO)
1.f	750 Pcs.	Union, 32 mm ø (ISO)

Approved Budget : Php 5,600,000.00

PACKAGE 2: WATER METER ASSEMBLY

Item No.	Quantity	Items/Description
2	9,100 Pcs.	Water Meter Assembly, 1/2" ø, Non-Reversible Reading

Approved Budget : Php 5,733,000.00

PACKAGE 3: HDPE PIPES

Item No.	Quantity	Items/Description
3.a	361 Rolls.	Pipe 32 mm ø x 90 m, SDR 11 (ISO)
3.b	1,110 Rolls.	Pipe, 25 mm ø x 150 m, SDR 11 (ISO)

Approved Budget : Php 2,805,000.00

Specifications, details and bidding documents are available to interested applicants upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 1,000.00 per package from April 20, 2004 to May 3, 2004, at the BAC Secretariat during its business hours.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on May 21, 2004 at 2:00 PM at the Training Hall of BCWD Administration Building. Submission and opening of sealed bids shall follow on June 3, 2004 at 9:00 A.M. at the same venue.

Butuan City Water District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or formality therein, to assume no responsibility whatsoever, to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their bids, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JORGE L. GUDUYO, C.E.
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 19 & 26, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region IX - Western Mindanao
Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 9911828, (062) 9911789, Fax No. (062) 9911009

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) in Region IX, with official address at Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City, invites all interested shipping companies/ship owners/operators who are registered/licensed by MARINA to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hiring of vessels for voyage charter in the disposal of NFA stocks from Port of Zamboanga to the provinces of Region IX and the ARMM province of Basilan, as follows:

Destination		Quantity (in Bags of 50 kg)	Approved Freight Rate per Bag of 50 kg (in Pesos)	Approved Budget (in Pesos)	Vessel Capacity (in Bags of 50 kg)
Province	Port				
Zambo. Sur	Pagadian	190,000	14.00	2,660,000.00	40,000 to 50,000
Sibugay	Liloy	65,000	15.00	825,000.00	15,000 to 20,000
Zambo. Norte	Dapitan/ Liloy	190,000	15.00	2,850,000.00	15,000 to 30,000
Basilan	Isabela	100,000	10.00	1,000,000.00	5,000 to 10,000
	TOTAL	535,000		7,335,000.00	

Shipping companies/ship owners/operators who wish to participate in the bidding shall accredit with NFA IX - Committee on Vessel Chartering (NFA IX - CVC), Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City on the dates/time stated in the schedule below. Those who were already accredited and/or issued with the Certificates of Accreditation for Voyage Charter by NFA IX - CVC, may no longer apply for accreditation. However, those whose Certificate of Accreditation for Voyage Charter have already expired shall apply for renewal.

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
• Accreditation of shipping companies/ ship owners/operators	April 6 to 20, 2004/ 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
• Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements	April 16 to 21, 2004/ 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
• Submission of eligibility requirements and Letter of Intent	April 23 & 26, 2004/ 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
• Issuance of bidding documents	May 4 to 6, 2004/ 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
• Pre-bidding conference	May 12, 2004 / 2:00 PM
• Submission and opening of bids	May 24, 2004 / 2:15 PM

Application forms for eligibility to bid and list of eligibility requirements will be issued only to accredited shipping companies/ship owners/operators by NFA IX - RBAC Secretariat, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php 500.00 on the dates/time specified in the above schedule. Prospective bidders may secure bidding documents at the NFA IX - RBAC Secretariat, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City upon submission of Letter of Intent and payment of non-refundable amount of Php 1,500.00 on the dates/time indicated in the above schedule.

The venue of Pre-Bid Conference, Submission and Opening of Bids will be at NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City

All particulars relative to Bid Security, Performance Security and bidding procedures shall be governed by the provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regulations - Part A dated July 11, 2003 of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and as provided in the Instruction to Bidders

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO M. MACASINAG
Regional Director

(PDI - April 5 & 19 2004)

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- Computer literate
- Good in oral and written communication

Apply in person and submit the following:
Complete Bio-data, 2x2 colored picture

MACTAN CEBU
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
LAPU-LAPU CITY PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO BID

1. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC) with office at Mactan, Lapulapu City, invites previously pre-qualified contractors classified by the registered with the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) as Medium A to bid for **Supply of Labor, tools, equipment, materials and supervision for the project: "Reinforcement of Existing Perimeter Fence (Phase I) at Airside"**. The Approved Budget for the Contract is P5,610,819.49.

Submission of Letter of Intent	April 27 to 30, 2004
Distribution of Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00	May 3 to 7, 2004
Pre-Bid Conference	May 14, 2004 @ 9 a.m.
Bid Opening	May 28, 2004 & 10 a.m. (closing 9:45 a.m.)

2. For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone number 3402486 local 2050/1461 or at telefax no. 341-4617.

3. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defect or informality, assume no obligations whatsoever of indemnity to the bidders any expense of loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ROGELIO C. YAUN
BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 19 & 26, 2004)

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592
e-mail: pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply and Delivery of One (1) Lot AFP E-Services Portal** with an approved budget of **Twenty Eight Million Eight Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 28,800,000.00)** chargeable against the AFP share from BCDA ALI Lot C Lease Agreement.

Only bids from entities who are manufacturers/suppliers/distributors/integrators of said equipment shall be entertained

Bid documents will be available for issuance starting **April 19, 2004** until **May 26, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of **Two Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (Php 2,800.00)**, which is non refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **May 07, 2004 at 2:00 PM** (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than three (3) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

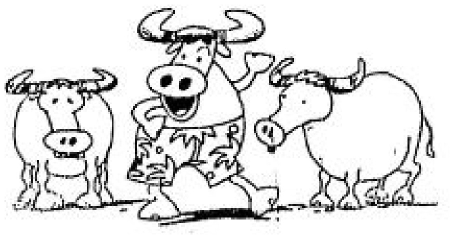
Deadline for Submission of Bids is on **May 27, 2004 at 09:00 AM** (local time) and followed the Opening of Bids at **09:30 AM** at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of his bid.

(Sgd.) REYNALDO D RIVERA
Major General AFP
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – April 19 & 26, 2004)

From the nation's No. 1 Newspaper:
INQUIRER



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MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2004

OBITUARIES

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P245 per column centimeter
(All prices exclusive of E-VAT)

DEADLINE
for reservations / cancellations / corrections
Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

Marietta Enriquez de La Haye Jousselin

10 May 1937 – 08 April 2004

Peacefully died in Paris, France shortly after receiving the Last Sacraments.

Her bereaved husband **Henri de La Haye Jousselin**; children **Louie, Lorenzo** and **Rosanna Guerrero**; daughter-in-law, **Marielo Prieto Guerrero**; grandchildren **Marco, Andrea** and **Alexandra**; brothers and sister **Manolo Enriquez (†), Victoria Enriquez Raffaele** and **Peter Enriquez**; sisters-in-law **Ditas Espejo Enriquez** and **Marilou Hechanova Enriquez** and other dear relatives and friends request you to pray for her eternal peace.

Her cremated remains will arrive on Sunday, 18 April 2004 from Paris, France and will lie in state at the Capilla de la Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City on Monday, 19 April 2004. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday, 21 April 2004 at 9:00 a.m. in the main church of the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park.

Interment will take place at the family crypt of Saint James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang immediately after the memorial mass.

In lieu of flowers, the family will appreciate donations to the Bosom Buddies Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc. or Friends of Elsie Gaches.

So lovingly remembered
On his
2nd Death Anniversary

PHILIP J. GIELCZYK

who joined his Creator on April 19, 2002

Holy Masses will be offered
at the following churches:

St. Martin de Porres .... 7:30 p.m.
UPS I, Parañaque City

Santuario de San Antonio .... 7:30 a.m.
Forbes Park, Makati

Liloan, Consolacion Cebu .... 4:00 p.m.
Cebu City

Redemptory Church .... 4:00 p.m.
Cebu City

His wife **Josie Gielczyk** and son **Michael Joseph** request relatives, friends and pious readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

Lourdes del Fierro Aguila

**of Castillejos, Zambales, Baguio City
and Quezon City**

*Peacefully passed away
on April 16, 2004 at the age of 86.*

She is a retired pharmacist of the Baguio General Hospital; wife to **Col. Geminiano O. Aguila** (†); mother to **Gloria** and **Manuel Pacis**, **Lito** and **Estrellita** (†) **Aguila**, **Josephine** and **Rafael Galvez**, **Arthur** and **Solaida Aguila**, **Luz** and **Peter Paul Bautista**, and **Grace Aguila**; grandmother to **David** and **Cai** and **Cristina**; **Kathy** and **Roy**, **Lyle** and **Samantha**; **Rica** and **Axl**, **Pia** and **Joel**; **Jevis**, **Tanya** and **Jan Arthur**; **Carlo** and **Jenny**, **Angelo** and **Aliza** and **Paolo**; great grandmother to **Nicholas**, **Migui** and **Andrei**; sister to **Maria F. Masilungan**, **Aurelia**, **Antonio**, **Alberto** (†), **Jose** (†), **Gabriel** (†), **Salvador** (†); **Juan** (†), **Perfecta F. Magsaysay** (†), **Josefina F. Reyes** (†), **Herminia F. Lesaca** (†), **Resureccion** (†) and **Salvador** (†).

Her remains lie in state at Mount Carmel Shrine, New Manila, Quezon City.

Cremation and inurnment will follow the 7:30 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, April 21, 2004.

In Loving Memory
On the 20th Anniversary of the death of
Our Beloved

BENITO V. JALBUENA, SR.

who passed away on April 20, 1984

We, his family, request relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Makati Medical Center:	7:30 a.m.; 12:00 noon; 4:00 p.m.
Medical Center Manila	7:00 a.m.; 5:30 p.m.
Santuario de San Antonio	7:30 a.m.; 12:15 p.m.

JONATHAN ASEBOQUE REY

*Joined our Creator
on April 17, 2004 at the age of 48.*

His loving wife **Rhodora**; children **Jackie, Samond** & **JR**; parents, siblings, in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers and those whose lives he had touched to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel B, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on April 24, 2004 at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Quezon City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

ANTONIA CRUZ ORTEGA

January 17, 1932 - April 19, 2003

Wife, mother, sister, friend, servant of the Lord. On her 1st year anniversary of coming home to the Lord, she taught all of us one lesson. Earth is not our final home, for we were created for something much better. At death you won't leave home – you will go home. Shed no more tears for Mama is finally at home with the Lord.

Husband Abe; children: Rev. Fr. Bogs, Bonn, Lala, Ann; sons-in-law, grandchildren & relatives request the pious readers to pray continually for her eternal repose

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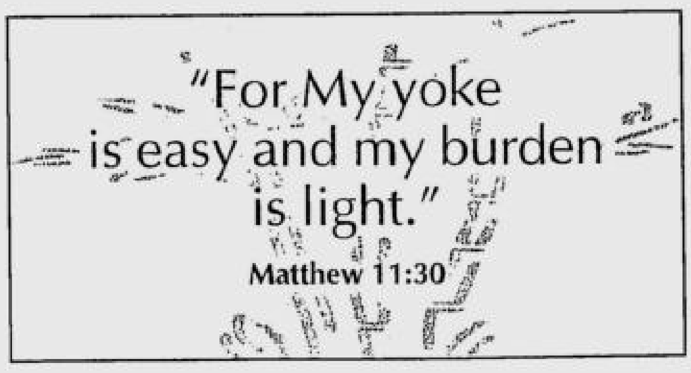

"For My yoke is easy and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:30

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
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No local customers affected by global hack attack: Cisco

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A LOCAL representative of Cisco Systems said that Philippine customers were not affected by the global attack on Cisco networking products recently.

This was despite the admission by the local publisher of an online game that the worldwide attack brought down networks of dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), including the computer servers hosting the popular online game "Ragnarok" in the Philippines.

"As far as we're concerned, there were no local problems," said Philip Tan, systems engineer at Cisco Systems Philippines.

He further stressed that reports of attacks affecting the local Cisco customers were just mere "suspicions."

Tan, however, said that PLDT was among its customers in the Philippines.

In a separate interview, a PLDT official admitted that there was a "minor glitch" and service "irregularities" in its network last week.

Horace Lavides, senior media senior manager, told Infotech that the telephone company conducted "routine network maintenance" last week, and has already corrected the network problems.

Local game publisher Level-Up announced on April 7 that the "service interruptions" last week were caused, by an attack on Cisco routers worldwide that started on March 29, the same day the company launched a new Ragnarok game episode known as "War of Emperium."

"Level-Up and PLDT took on some hackers in PVP action, but (Ragnarok) is back online and in demand," the announcement said.

Level-Up said that it resolved with PLDT the network problems last week within 48 hours, noting it had upgraded its database servers and replaced all its switches.

Level-Up said it also conducted service maintenance causing its online games to be unavailable.

Ragnarok Online will resume the War of the Emperium episode on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the firm added.

The global attack came after Cisco Systems issued a statement last week, warning customers of possible attacks after a group of Italian teenage hackers posted a "hacker's kit" that exploited several Cisco router vulnerabilities which were discovered more than a year ago.

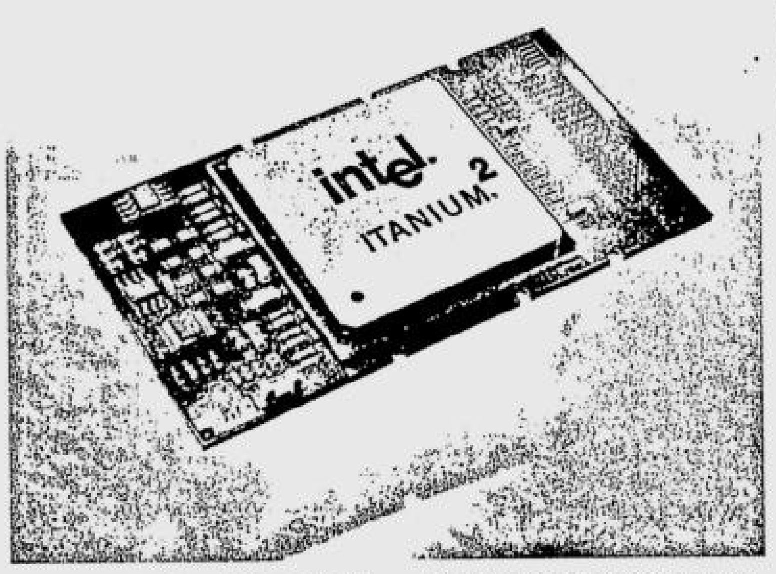
Cisco has detailed the system vulnerabilities at www.cisco.com/warp/public/707/cisco-sn-20040326-exploits.shtml.

Most of the security vulnerabilities discovered made Cisco routers and switches susceptible to distributed denial-of-service attacks.

Denial-of-service attacks occur when hackers "hold hostage" hundreds of servers and flood a target network with millions of spurious data packets, which then overwhelm switches and routers.

Intel still on track with Itanium despite statements of rival Sun

By Alexander F. Villafania



DESPITE being taunted by a hardware rival, microprocessor giant Intel Corp. remains on track with its flagship 64-bit Itanium processor.

In a statement, Intel said the Itanium processor family "will continue to be focused at the backend, mission-critical applications oriented market segments," belying comments made by Sun Microsystems during a recent technology update in Singapore.

"There's no change in the target market segments of the Itanium processor family," Intel insists.

The chip giant continues to parade its Itanium chip as it enthusiastically mapped out the Itanium's future during a press conference earlier this year.

The company also denied that the Itanium chip was not backward compatible with 32-bit server applications.

"Itanium supports backward-compatibility. In terms of software and hardware working together, there's little difference between IA32 and EM64T, or even Itanium," according to Intel, referring to two other chip technologies that it utilizes.

The company even said that the entry of the Extended Memory 64 Technology, or EM64T, would not affect Itanium's future. By definition, the EM64T incorporates both 32-bit and 64-bit processing power to upcoming Xeon processors, currently Intel's most widely used 32-bit chip series.

Bolstering Intel's statements of the Itanium's backward compatibility is a recent report of the Reed Electronics Group, which said that both Intel and AMD's flagship server processors were compatible.

The renewed clash between Sun and Intel arose when Sun Microsystems began using Advanced Micro Devices' (AMD) 64-bit Opteron processor, apparently a challenger to Intel's own Itanium processor.

Steve Campbell, Sun Microsystems vice president for enterprise systems, had earlier nixed any plans that Sun would incorporate the Itanium processor, even when it already uses Intel's more popular Xeon server chips.

"Itanium on Sun is not going to happen," said Campbell earlier at a press conference in Singapore. "I see no future for a Sun product with an Itanium processor. We have no intention whatsoever in supporting Itanium."

"On the 64-bit space, there's probably only 3 percent of servers based on Itaniums out there. Itanium is expensive, it's very hot . . . I don't think Itanium is going to happen," Campbell added.

Intel would not, however, comment on Campbell's allegations that the chip giant's investments allocated for the Itanium were being moved to the Yamhill chip, a new 64-bit processor whose actual existence is still being speculated.

On the other hand, Intel is beleaguered by waning forecasts of the International Data Corporation (IDC) on the Itanium. Early this year, the research group undercut its forecast of Itanium server shipments from $8.7 million to just $7.5 million in 2007.

Meanwhile, Intel introduced two Itanium2 processors at the recently held Intel Developer's Forum in Taipei, Tawian. Servers based on the new processors are approximately 28 percent lower in price and up to 25 percent higher performing than previous dual-processor Itanium2-based servers, according to Intel.

The new chips released were the Itanium2 processor at 1.40 GHz with 3Mb of cache and the Itanium2 processor at 1.60 GHz with 3Mb of cache.

Intel said new dual processor Itanium2 systems are available from a variety of system manufacturers including Bull, Dell, Fujitsu Siemens, HCL, IBM, Kraftway, Lang Chao, Lenovo, Maxdata, Samsung, and Transtec AG.

Abalos blows top at website launch . . .

From page B16

the Comelec on the Computerized Voters List (CVL), the Voters Validation System, the Voter's ID system, precinct mapping—all of which, she said, had wasted millions of pesos.

When Akol finally accused the Comelec of squandering the money, it was then that Abalos, who seemed to have been unaware of what was supposed to be discussed, stood up and defended his position.

"I'm under the impression that at the back of your mind you already have a reservation about your officials in the Comelec," Abalos said. He then gave a lengthy justification of what the Comelec was doing and reprimanded his critics.

Abalos argued that the Supreme Court, which ruled early this year to scrap the second phase of the poll computerization, did not give them enough time to explain the Comelec's decision to award the bidding to Mega Pacific Consortium.

Abalos cited a provision under their terms of reference (TOR) that companies can form a joint consortium effort, despite a legal requirement that all bidders for government projects should have at least three years of experience.

"I've been calling on you, the voters, to help your Comelec. It is painful for us that the commission's credibility is jeopardized by these allegations," Abalos said, referring to alleged flaws on the bidding for the counting machines.

Although Abalos stood pat on his defense, Lagman continued to disagree.

"We've heard his story many times already," Lagman argued.

During the question and answer portion, Lagman said that the P1.2 billion worth of counting machines acquired by the Comelec did not pass the stress test conducted by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

"Maricor (Akol) and I approached (DOST Secretary Estrella) Alabastro to confirm if the machines did not pass the test, and she said 'yes'," Lagman said.

Incidentally, Abalos also quoted Alabastro who said that the machines were in good condition.

In a separate interview, Alabastro clarified that the DOST conducted a total of three major tests on the counting machines: first, prior to the Comelec awarding of the project, then two more after the awarding.

Alabastro explained that the DOST did not know the Comelec's TOR for the bidding.

"We were only given a task by the Comelec to test the machines. We had no hand on deciding who should win the bidding," Alabastro said.

Alabastro added that Mega Pacific's machines during the first set of tests passed. When Mega Pacific won the bid, she noted that 18 of the 1,990 machines failed. During a retest, only one of the 18 machines failed.

On the other hand, Alabastro said that neither Abalos nor Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, supposed to be the head of the poll automation, fully understood the testing procedures.

"We only gave the results to Abalos and it was his to interpret," Alabastro explained.

Lagman also belied Abalos' claims that the Comelec had discussed with the public and private sector some of its modernization projects.

"I submitted two papers explaining the risks involved in their CVL—first in 2002, then in the middle of last year. But Abalos just brushed these off," Lagman said.

After about 20 minutes of arguments between Abalos and Lagman, the panel's moderator interrupted to proceed with the official launch of FindPrecinct.com. Afterwards, Abalos hurriedly exited the building.

Fred Torres, president of the Chief Information Officers Forum which organized the summit, said Abalos was aware of Lagman and Akol's attendance at the panel discussion.

"It was natural that this thing would happen," Torres explained.

MMC slot works well with 6230

From page B16

here—obviously it's an operator-based service, so the future of this functionality is solely in the hands of Globe, Smart or Sun.

Let's cut to the chase and tell you what we believe is the most significant addition to the 6230—the MMC expansion slot. The specs say that the 6230 comes with a complimentary 32-Mb MMC card, but the unit we got came with a 16-Mb card and no accessories. It was obviously a prototype unit (inside the unit beneath the MMC card where the model number is indicated, a sticker with the word "PROTO" is attached).

The expansion slot is useful for your MP3 or AAC audio files, but with 16Mb you'd be able to carry only four or five songs with you. Compare that to the 1,136 I have on my iPod and this number becomes insignificant. If you get tired of listening to the same four or five songs over and over again, you can buy a bigger capacity MMC or you can turn on the built-in FM tuner. To use this, you first have to plug in a headset, which sucks because this device has pretty impressive speaker quality for a phone. It would have been better if you could play the radio straight out of the phone's speakers even without a headset. Try playing the sample music file, Peter Malick's "Strange Transmissions," sung by Nora Jones. Also, try Mobile Karaoke under Collections in the Applications folder, where you get to sing "All Out of Love" by Air Supply. The song sucks but the speaker quality of the 6230 is good.

The phone even has an equalizer which you can set to Normal, Pop, Rock, Jazz and other preset audio options. The polyphonics system was also upgraded to play 24 chords instead of four chords on earlier Nokia devices.

The MMC and Media Player in the 6230 complement each other well. It's like having a drive in your phone where you can swap music files from your PC. It goes the other way around, like transferring files from the phone to the PC. You simply "Move" the images and video to the MMC, get it out of the phone and slot it into your MMC reader.

Which brings us to the camera feature of the 6230.

Audio and video

Still images can be taken on Standard, Portrait or Night modes, while image quality can be Basic, Normal or High. The camera also has a 10-second timer. The 6230 has the same camera used in the Nokia 6650 and the 7600, that funky-shaped phone which has yet to be officially released locally, but is now out in the gray market for about P21,000.

Video clip lengths can be set to the default 15-second clips or to the maximum five minutes of audio and video footage. Video is taken at 15 frames per second (broadcast-quality video is around 30 frames per second). You can record up to 2Mb (five minutes) of video. The 15-second video clips only take up about 90Kb of space. Recordings are stored in ".3gp" format. However, Windows Media Player does not support this format. Once you transfer the video clip to your PC, it is recognized as a Quicktime file, so you have to open it with Quicktime instead of Windows Media Player. Talk about Nokia's rivalry with Microsoft's Smartphone. Nokia of course uses the Symbian OS for its phones.

Meanwhile, standard still photos in Normal setting would take up anywhere from 15 to 30Kb. Better photos are taken if you set the camera on "High" quality and if the subject does not move and lighting is good, but this would increase the file size. Really poor shots will weigh in at only 2 Kb, but high-quality ones will bloat up to 80 Kb. Images are stored as JPEG files.

The Night mode solves earlier problems of Nokia phones when it comes to dark environments. A flash still would have been better, but Night mode will do for everyday pictures.

The default storage for images and video is the phone memory, which has 8.8Mb free on top of the ones used for the phone apps and games. Again, however, these could all be transferred to the MMC using the "Move" command. Space is no longer a problem.

Gallery

The Gallery offers easy access to all types of media files in your phone. There are 37 preset images in the Gallery, 25 midi files and 11 ringing tones which are all removable and six preset Java applications (you can download apps not exceeding 128Kb). In the MMC there is one bonus music file (Peter Malick and Nora Jones), plus four short sample video clips.

The 6230 has a 65,536-color TFT display at 128x128 pixel resolution (27.3 mm x 27.3 mm active matrix display, an improvement over the 6220's passive matrix). In end-user terms, this gives us five lines for text in basic mode with 16-pixel font. Generally the screen becomes pale when hit by direct sunlight, but not as pale as previous Nokia models were. The integrated digital camera is at 640x480 pixels, an improvement from the 6220's 352x288 resolution. Still, this pales in comparison to megapixel phone cameras already out in the Japanese market.

From the grin department, we move on to the gripes department.

Let's start with the Phone Book. While the 6230 has an impressive 1,000-capacity contact list (something users of the old 7110 have long enjoyed), the contact name is limited to 14 characters.

Thus, when I transferred my Sony Ericsson phone contacts to my SIM and then moved the same to the 6230, the name "Alex Villafania" became "Alex Villafani," making him sound like a funny guy, which he is, incidentally. Also, "Rese Jamir-Carbonell" became "Rese Jamir-Car," making her sound like an entry-level sedan from the Middle East.

Another problem is that, my Sony Ericsson's PIM has entries for mobile number, home number, office number, 2 e-mail addresses and a website address. However, the 6230 only has entries for one number, one e-mail address, one web address, one postal address, a user ID and space for some notes. In this day and age when people have so many contact numbers, it's better to have all of them stored in your PIM and your SIM.

But since the 6230 only has room for one number, an entry from my SIM— "Edil Guanzon," for example, had four contact numbers—came out as four entries with the same name. The first entry was for his home number, another for his office number, and two more still for his two mobile numbers. It was very clumsy indeed since you didn't know which one was his cell number unless you rename the entry as something like "Edil Guanzon Mobile," "Edil Guanzon Home" or "Edil Guanzon Office"—but then again you'd go back to the 14-character limitation.

Hard to reach

Another clumsy thing about the 6230 is a repeat of the N-Gage mistake. You have to turn the phone off first, open the back casing and get the battery out to get to the MMC. As stated earlier, we hope that phone makers would build their phones with card slots at the sides or bottom for hot card-swapping.

The 6230 has a ton of other features, but many of them are starting to become standard, like EDGE and GPRS support, tri-band operation (GSM 900, 1800 and 1900), MMS (up to 100Kb per MMS), Bluetooth, infrared and e-mail (up to 30Kb per e-mail, supports both POP3 and SMTP).

The phone weighs 97 grams and is 103 mm x 44 mm x 20 mm small—slightly smaller than the 6220 but heavier by 5 grams.

Which brings us to battery life. The 6230 takes 2 hours and 10 minutes to fully charge. Nokia says talk time is three hours while standby time is up to five days. Our real world tests started with the phone being booted up from full charge at 3 p.m. of Maundy Thursday. It was then subjected to a barrage of video footage and playback, plus photos over Good Friday and Black Saturday.

Photos were sent to relatives and friends, games were played extensively to offset the lack of phone calls during the Holy Week. Files were uploaded and downloaded unto the phone, MP3 files were constantly played to break the silence of the Lenten season.

I was willing to bet that, having started 3 p.m. of Maundy Thursday and not being turned off for the duration of the test, the phone would run out of juice and die on Easter Sunday instead of rising up from the dead. We turned the phone off only on three short occasions: twice to retrieve the MMC to load and unload data, and once for 30 minutes on Good Friday in church while doing the stations of the cross (I mean hey, even technology has to go offline on Good Friday, right?).

Resurrection

True enough, shortly after lunch of Black Saturday or about 45 hours after being turned on, the phone went off the blink. It couldn't take the constant video and MP3 playback. Still, we must remember that this is a phone—not a digicam, video recorder or MP3 player. It just so happened that the phone had those extra features on the side.

We had to recharge the phone again later that night, and on Easter Sunday, the 6230 was resurrected, two days after its battery died. We cut the phone some slack this time around, only taking occasional pictures. This time the phone lasted three days.

While the comparison to its predecessor, the 6220, is inevitable, we couldn't help but compare the 6230 with the 6610 because of its design, features and target market. Voice command and the three-minute Dictaphone voice recording are absent in the Nokia 6610, plus the fact that the 6230 has an e-mail client, large Notes capacity and media player. And don't forget the MMC.

All in all, the 6230 is a good multimedia phone in a small package, and it has a lot of intelligent functions, connectivity options and storage expansion. It is well-balanced between multimedia and business functions.

My advice? If you're looking for a high-end phone with which you can have fun and get your work done at the same time using e-mail, writing down lengthy notes and surfing on EDGE or GPRS, get the 6230 instead of those so-called "smartphones." Current smartphones don't offer the multimedia and expansion capabilities of the 6230. What's more, the 6230's media player does not have hiccups (unlike some Windows-based phones we know), you can play the radio and MP3 music files, capture decent still images, moving video and voice recordings, store them in an MMC and transfer different media types to your PC via wireless or via USB and MMC.

Pricey

While the phone is far from perfect, it is a good alternative to smartphones because chances are you'd get the same job done with the 6230 while also getting audio and video capabilities.

How much is it? Local prices have yet to be announced since it hasn't been launched yet. However, a quick check at Greenhills revealed that the 6230 has been out in the gray market since the first week of April, where it was sold for anywhere between P29,000 and P31,000. Last week, however, the price of the 6230 dropped to P26,000. Just two days ago, the cheapest 6230 I found was down to P24,000. Definitely for the high end, but I suggest you wait till the launch so the 6230 can be bundled in cheaper packages along with operator subsidy and subscription.

INFOTECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Leo Magno

Abalos blows top at website launch when asked about poll automation

By Alexander Villafania

ABALOS: Grilled to exasperation

THE LAUNCH of Web-based election service FindPrecinct.com turned ugly when Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chair Benjamin Abalos had a verbal tussle with critics regarding his defunct poll automation program.

"I thought this was supposed to be a launch of FindPrecinct. I didn't know it would turn out to be like this," an exasperated Abalos said in front of about 300 attendees of a summit on critical information and infrastructure.

Abalos, who joined the event as part of the panel discussion on secure voting, was grilled by fellow panelist Maricor Akol, former president of the IT Association of the Philippines (ITAP), and Gus Lagman, a member of the information systems group of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Lagman and Akol are among the staunchest critics of Abalos' election modernization programs. They were also the ones who filed a criminal case against the Comelec on alleged flawed bidding of the poll automation project. Since then, Abalos rarely attended events where Lagman or Akol was also present.

During the panel discussions, Akol was citing past mistakes of

ABALOS/ B15

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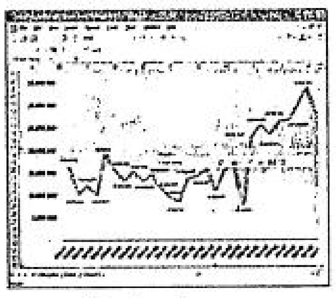
Increasing or decreasing Excel screen magnification

By Jerry Liao



YOU can increase/decrease your MS Excel screen magnification by using your mouse (this trick will only work with a mouse with a trackball/wheel).

1) Open MS Excel

2) Position your mouse to any part of an Excel cell.

3) Press your CTRL key and your mouse pointer will be shown onscreen with the plus (+) sign.

4) Roll the mouse trackball/wheel forward or backward.

5) Your screen magnification will increase or decrease.

For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. Join The Powertips Group. Register at www.brainshare.com.ph/register.htm and get tips via e-mail.

POWERTIPS

MMC slot works well with new Nokia 6230

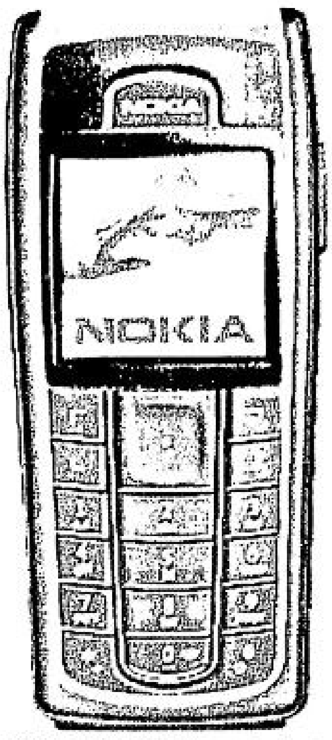
By Leo Magno

IN THE FIRST week of April, Nokia's 6230 was already available in the gray market, but word has it that the official local launch of the new phone model would be delayed. The 6230 at first glance seems like a mere upgrade to the 6220. Upon closer inspection, however, we found that the 6230 has a chip on its shoulder—a memory chip, to be exact.

The ace up this phone's sleeve is not just another card, it's a multimedia card (MMC) beneath the battery tucked below the SIM card slot. The SIM card construction itself is new for Nokia phones since it is fixed to the case but unhinges for easy SIM replacement.

This isn't the first phone to have an MMC slot. It was the Siemens SL45i. Even the Nokia N-Gage had an MMC slot for games. However, both the N-Gage and 6230 have to be turned off first and the battery has to be removed if you want to replace the MMC with another one loaded with, say, MP3 music. This is most inconvenient, and we wish someone out there would develop a phone with a slot-in MMC storage at the side or bottom of the unit so you can hot swap memory cards.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's start with how the 6230 demo unit came to us in the first place.



THE NOKIA 6230 is not the first phone to have a built-in MMC slot. Nokia did it before with the N-Gage and, even before that, the Siemens SL45i already had one. However, how we wish the slot were on the side or at the bottom of the unit, instead of having to first open the unit's case and take the battery out before you can get to the MMC.

No charger

It was a Holy Wednesday when we got the review unit from Nokia. It was not in a box and had no accessories whatsoever, not even the battery charger. I don't want to be a smart-ass here but I think it's too presumptuous for anyone to think that I already have a Nokia charger at home. I actually don't since I use a Sony Ericsson and my wife has been having an affair with Samsung for the past two years, so I had to borrow my mother-in-law's Nokia charger. So there was no charger, no digital pen or even the nifty Nokia Connectivity Cable DKU-2, which is used to connect the phone directly via USB to a compatible PC. We didn't care much about the absence of the Bluetooth hands-free set because the phone has integrated hands-free function (when making or receiving calls with the 6230, a "Loudspeaker" option becomes available onscreen).

The addition of the USB cable that connects to the phone's Pop-Port interface at the bottom of the phone would have been welcome. I mean seriously, how many of you wish you could just plug the phone in directly via your PC's USB slot and start downloading or uploading MP3s, JPEGs or MPEG files? Bluetooth or infrared just doesn't hack it.

For this review however, we were not able to perform actual MMS or GPRS tests although our SIM was already GPRS-enabled via over-the-air activation on the Sony Ericsson. If you already have a 6230 acquired from abroad or from the gray market, be warned that operators do not yet market the phone locally (understandably so because it hasn't even been launched yet, and what I have is a prototype unit), so you won't able to perform over-the-air GPRS activation. Same goes for any mobile unit not yet in the Philippine market. Let it be noted then, that all references to GPRS and MMS data connectivity in this article are all theoretical. Kudos to Smart Customer Care for being open very early in the morning on Good Friday—a guy named Travis was on duty that day to assist us.

Grid and List views

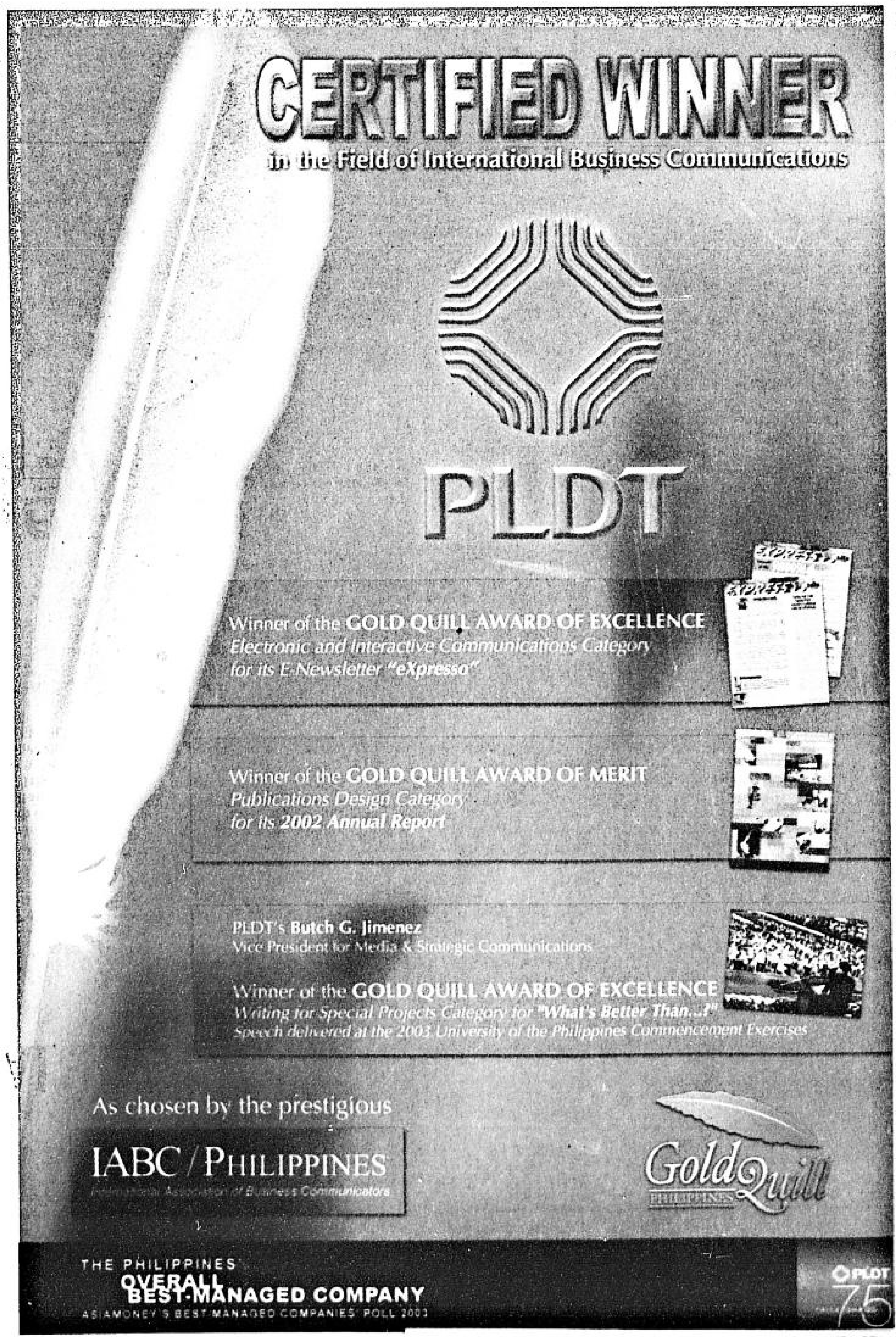
First thing you'll notice when you turn the phone on is the choice of how your Menus are presented. Traditionally, Nokia presents menus as a vertical list of items (List View). But now Nokia has implemented some changes in its Series 40 user interface. Some people prefer a Grid View for the main menu as opposed to a scrolling one since the former allows for quicker navigation. Nokia has taken this step by offering the second Grid View option, with nine icons formed in three rows. You can choose between these two types, but we went with the List View for the moment.

Next thing we noticed is the new Presence functionality. Ever received a call at a bad time, like when you're at a meeting or while the baby's bawling? The 6230 allows you to set a profile at your telco's Presence server. Your callers, assuming they also have Presence-capable handsets, will be able to see your status and know that it isn't a good time to call. It's like seeing your status in instant messaging (IM) services, whether you're away, busy, logged off, etc. We tried using this function and it was not available

MMC/B15

STANDARD photos at high quality would consume anywhere from 20Kb to 80Kb, depending on how well the shot was taken. The photos above, for example, were at 75Kb. Still, we're waiting for the first megapixel phone from Nokia.

THE TWO photos above were taken in Night Mode, which does the job well even without a flash. The photos were taken at night, without flash, in a dimly lit billiard hall and bar where we were able to play with Django Bustamante and Bata Reyes.



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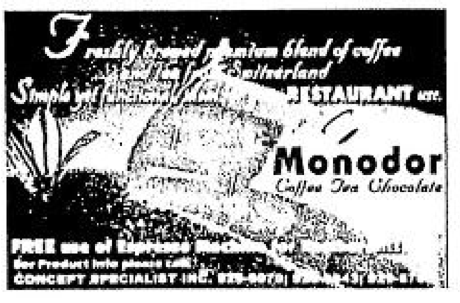
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To be a CEO, you need an MBA with a twist

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

FOR THE longest time, the emphasis of early learning has been on the 3Rs—reading, writing and arithmetic.

Similarly, MBA courses have always focused on finance, operations and marketing.

But just as new findings point that developing motor skills in children leads to better brain development, companies have realized that MBA programs are no longer enough to give them the kind of managers and future CEOs they need.

Add to the situation the sprouting of billionaires who do not even have college degrees and the question comes up: Is an MBA still relevant these days?

Eduardo A. Morato Jr, dean of the W. SyCip Graduate School of Business of the Asian Institute of Management, admits there has been a decline in the enrollment in their MBM program.

From two to three sections with about 60 students in each class, it is now down to one section with 75 students.

AIM management knew something had to be done to arrest the decline. The saving grace of the institution has been its Master in Entrepreneurship program, where enrollment is steadily increasing.

"We interviewed recruiters of big firms and asked them what they were looking for in (MBA) graduates. Their answers revolved around leadership and people skills, values, ethics and personalities. It's about making things happen, doing skills," he said.

Morato says AIM incorporated an IQ2 test in an IQ and EQ test for MBA graduates. The IQ2 test is an opportunity seeking test. He points out that everyone passed the IQ test with flying colors but only one out of 10 passed the IQ2 tests.

Morato himself says he gets a lot of requests from firms to do training on creativity and intuition.

"The problem is whether training is enough to make people creative," he says.

He points out that there might be structures and systems in place that do not encourage creativity.

He cites a study made by the University of Nebraska that showed the person with the highest extra sensory perception (ESP) is the CEO.

MORATO

"The CEO has to have the right guesses. The good ones make the right intuitive decisions," he stresses.

Taking all these into account, AIM relaunched its MBM program last year. First, the name was changed to MBA, the more commonly used tag for the course.

Second, after 35 years of teaching MBM the way Western schools would do it (Harvard set up AIM), the new AIM MBA is steeped in Asian business systems. It is global in scope, but Asian in content and delivery, making for a distinctly Asian MBA.

The new program has five key elements in its design: hi-tech and hi-touch managing; an Asian skew; new learning modes, action orientation; and standards of excellence. The course is completed in two years.

Morato admits the new MBA incorporates some aspects of the ME such as self-mastery as this is part of enabling a person to relate better with others.

AIM also uses concepts in human behavior in Asian organizations. It developed Asian intellectual, emotional, adversary and spiritual quotients to hone participants' people skills.

Where can Filipinos invest funds abroad?

By Rico Hizon
Contributor

FILIPINO investors in general hedge their investment bets in their own market, whether it be in stocks, bonds, currencies, property, art, etc. And one may ask, why doesn't the Pinoy investor explore investment opportunities abroad? Is it the lack of knowledge of the markets, lack of international exposure or maybe the shortage of information and research?

In an interview with John Cairns of IDEA Global, a global economic research group and Mark Konym, the CEO of Allianz Dresdner Asset Management, I asked them for recommendations on where Filipinos could invest their money in the global marketplace.

Recent records show the average daily trading volume in the Philippines is just $10 million, quite small compared with its Asian neighbors with volumes ranging from a minimum of $100 million to a maximum of $4 billion daily. It just goes to show that there is so much liquidity slushing around the region and greater opportunity for Filipinos to invest abroad.

Q: Where should Filipinos be looking in global stock markets for alternative investments?

Cairns: In general, Filipinos looking to diversify should rather look to the larger G7 economies, particularly the European Union (France, Italy, Germany, UK) and United States.

Konym: The EU and US equities are the best bets at the moment because these markets offer safer investment opportunities and, very importantly, markets that are not correlated with that in the Philippines. Low correlation increases the portfolio diversification benefit.

Q: Where are the equity opportunities in Asia?

Cairns: If Filipino investors want to look at some key Asian markets, probably the best places are South Korea, Singapore, Japan and greater China (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong) for stock investments. South Korea, Singapore and Greater China are the lower risk markets because their respective economies would do well this year.

Konym: For opportunities in the region, then my first preference will be India. Why? The country's economic numbers are quite impressive with 3rd quarter GDP growing at 10.4 percent and the market is one of the most liquid in Asia (average volume $3-$4 billion), good quality companies and reasonable valuations. The other market that we are positive on is Malaysia. Malaysia has lagged behind its regional peers in 2003 and under new Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi the economy is expected to improve.

Q: What about in fixed income investments, where are the attractive destinations?

Cairns: For fixed income investments, the Australian and New Zealand markets offer good rates, because of the large interest rate differential with the US and other Asian countries. I also favor UK bonds given that the British pound has lagged behind the euro and the central bank, the Bank of England (BOE) is likely to raise rates soon makes their bonds attractive.

However, one note of caution, there may be a large currency risk between the Aussie dollar, the New Zealand dollar and the British pound against the peso because of the appreciation of their currencies versus the Philippine currency's volatility to the downside.

Q: Should new investors buy stocks or funds?

Konym: Small investors should always choose mutual funds because this diversifies risk. I would suggest that one would invest in a regional fund rather than a country fund, because in regional fund, the fund spread the investment in various stocks around the region, so this evens out the risk/reward in the different countries.

Q: What is a mutual fund?

Cairns: A security that gives small investors access to a well diversified portfolio of equities, bonds, and other securities. Each shareholder participates in the gain or loss of the fund. Shares are issued and can be redeemed as needed. The fund's net asset value (NAV) is determined each day. Each mutual fund portfolio is invested to match the objective stated in the prospectus.

The majority of mutual funds are what you call open-end funds. Open-end funds are funds that have no limit to the number of shares they can issue. Units are bought and sold at their current NAV.

Q: Who are some of the most respected mutual fund companies in the region?

Konym: There are quite a number in the region based in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Among the top fund managers are Aberdeen Asset Management, AIG Global Investment, Alliance Capital Management, Allianz Dresdner Asset Management, Citigroup Asset Management, DBS Asset Management, Fidelity Investements, First State Investments, Henderson Global Investors, Scudder Global Opportunities Funds, and Shroder Investment Management.

They all offer a whole list of fund products ranging from equity country (China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan) and regional (Asia, Europe, US) funds, bond funds, Asian technology funds, European equity and bond funds to more specific funds in the telecom, health care, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure and media.

Trade rules under fire as tariffs near nod

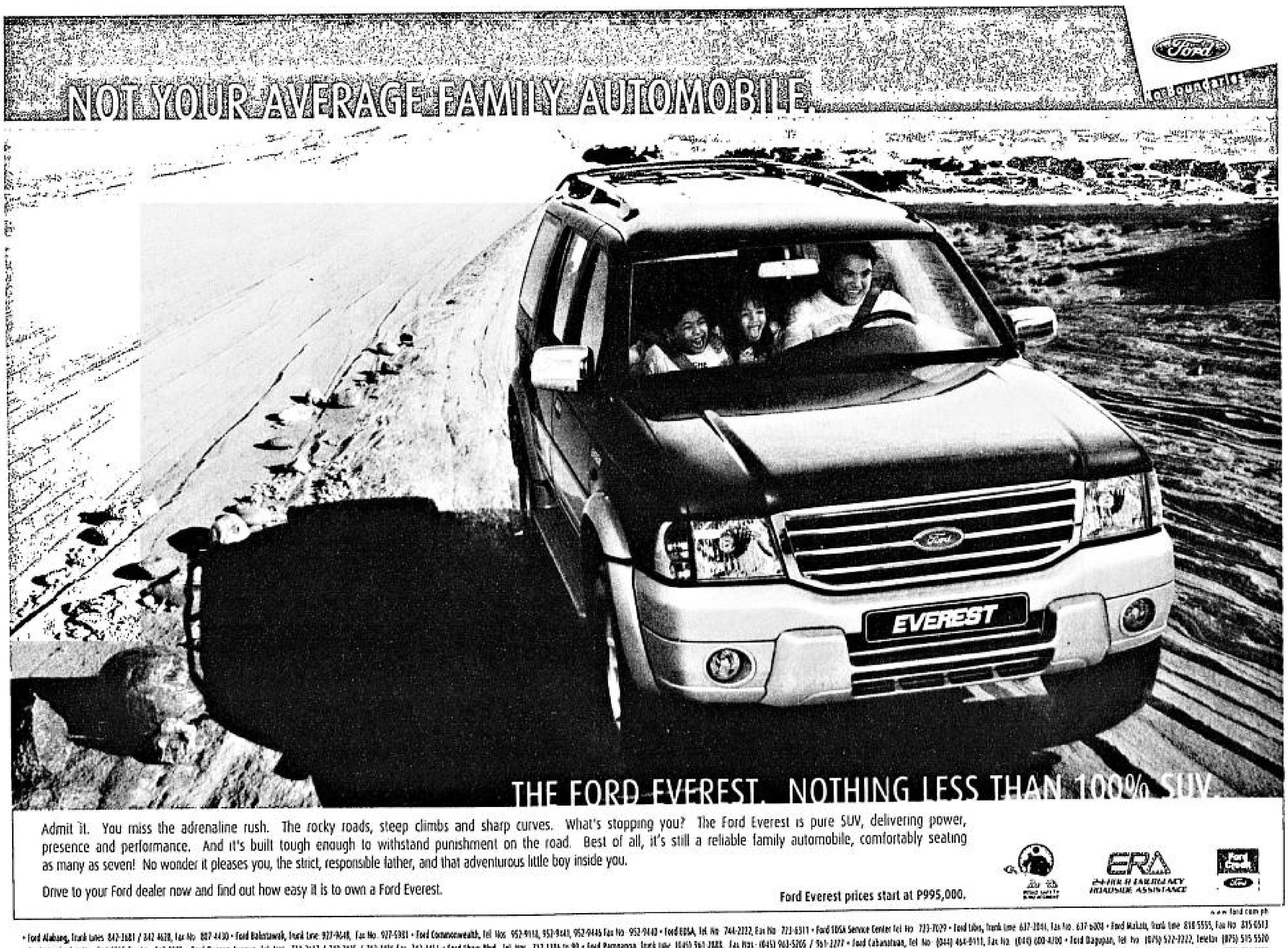
NEW YORK—A US import law meant to protect American industries is once again under fire from trade experts and business executives.

Chinese bedroom furniture and televisions, as well as pond-grown shrimp from Asia and Latin America, are among the latest targets of tariffs intended to keep imports from being dumped—or sold at below normal price—on American shores.

US seafood, TV and furniture companies have won preliminary approval for the tariffs, and the US International Trade Commission is likely to pass them sometime this year.

Proponents say raising prices on these goods will save jobs and allow US companies to compete more effectively.

But several trade experts and US business executives question such a move, saying it will spark further trade frictions and do little to stem the flow of cheap goods. *Reuters*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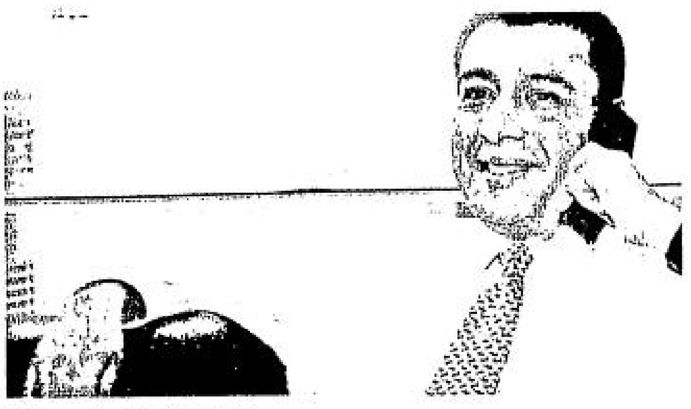


PB uses the black version.

The flip side of cellphones

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

IT HAS been the market leader in mobile phones for years but it has never come up with a popular model for the China and US markets.

Most of its other competitors have come up with the fold phone or the clam-type units but Nokia formally launched its first fold phone, the 7200, only last Thursday.

Most Nokia units are monoblock types. These types are popular in the Philippines where texting is a national activity.

However, in countries where mobile phones are used more for making calls than texting, or sending short messages systems, it is the fold phones which are popular.

CHATTING with the beige

Nokia (Philippines) Inc. country general manager Parikshit "PB" Bhasin says Nokia came up with a fold phone now because it was only now that the market asked for it. .

He says that at any given time, there are 50 ongoing Nokia research projects and Nokia's biggest finding was that the market wanted a fold phone from Nokia.

Although the firm is not expressing it, the new phone is expected to appeal more to women. The 7200 has a textile cover that can be changed into four different kinds. It also comes with accessories that can be bought separately such as a pouch, a wrist band and the cover.

The launch of the 7200 comes with the launch of the Nokia pattern. PB admits mobile phones and electronic gadgets in general have translated from useful tools to lifestyle must-haves.

PB says this particular type is expected to appeal to the fashion conscious set.

Nokia asked five designers to use the patterns into pieces of clothing which will be put on display in Nokia stores.

PB has been in the Philippines for four years. He set up Nokia's operations in India in 1994. Nokia Philippines restructured last January creating four business groups—mobile phones, multi-media, enterprise solutions and networks.

Professionalizing the family business

MAPPING THE FUTURE

By Augusto L. de Leon

FORMALLY given or not, the CEO is the person in the organization who ultimately makes the decisions and whose focus, directions, and plans for the business are implemented. In a family enterprise, the CEO is usually the founder or one of the second-generation siblings. Concerns about the future of the business arise when the CEO is the grandfather or the grandmother who makes decisions that are followed but whose levels of energy to gather information prior to making such decisions becomes more and more limited. The bigger the size of the business, the internal information factor becomes more critical. Likewise, rapidly changing environment in the industry and economy makes the environment factor more critical requiring a drastic change in the business model that has worked in the past.

Entrepreneur-founder CEOs—young or old—are of the type who sees the future and deeply believes in their vision which others may not see. They see opportunities and jump to take advantage very quickly. Often they do not see the problems but only the opportunities. This type of entrepreneurs can engage in various unrelated businesses simply because each one is an opportunity to be grasped at the time. Others can be obsessed to create things, to innovate, to claim fame and thus craves to control. They usually succeed best in a growing economy or a growing industry. Some fall into the trap of chasing a vision way ahead of its time and may not have the patience nor capital to nurture the investment and wait.

The second general type of Entrepreneur CEO springs from their "technical" background. They are also visionaries in identifying the utility of a product and obsessed to make the product work. Technicians tend to work in the present, get into details and believe that he himself has got to do things to be right. As individualists, they tend to develop one-product companies producing specialized products and have no problem with focus. However, there are also technician entrepreneurs who easily get tired with a product and are always eager to jump from one product to another after they solve what they believe are the technical problems of their invention. Chances are they will neglect the commercial aspect of the enterprise.

The third type of the CEO is the "manager" type. They tend to be the "X" factor toward professionalizing family enterprise that has made good under the leadership of the first and second types of leadership.

Manager CEOs tend to see problems and take pride in solving problems. They crave for order and thus tend to set up systems. The Manager CEO will be more open to hiring competent people to obtain fresh experience to complement his own and further grow the business.

A professional manager making an entry into a family corporation needs to overcome critical hurdles if he is to succeed and grow the business to the next level.

First of all he has to recognize that while his background may be via some specialized function of management, a family business is most likely to be managed by all around functional people who understand more the details of what works rather than the principle of why things work. Next, a high rated professional executive may have been used to working with subordinates who are in their position based on qualifications. Many family businesses start by hiring those the owners trust and those whom they can afford. Their valued people are those who grew on the job in spite of their limited capability for growth.

On the visioning and strategic process, it is likely that the founder lays claim to this prerogative. It is possible that the second-generation owners may insist on tradition to dominate the strategic options available. Making critical decisions on where to go next and how to go there often causes conflicts among siblings unless the founder is able to play a major role in the shift to the new direction.

The shift from individual/founder visioning to one done by the organization based more on hard facts rather than tuition can be a rough process.

Reliable business systems and procedures are essential requisites for a professional manager to be able to work. In some family enterprises, the process of building and making systems work can be disrupted when several family members insist on doing things their way.

Many family enterprises have grown without establishing formal systems of control and management reporting. Controls exist but are based on what owners and their trusted people are able to see and observe, and are more likely not on reliable and disciplined formal reports. The negative impact of the system is that delegated work and authority are normally restricted to relatives on the assumption that they can be trusted. Second is that assignments of personnel on the basis of "can be trusted" may not lead to selection of the most competent for the job. Thirdly, the system lends itself to gamesmanship focused on establishing personal relationships rather than on objective performance output.

Absence of a formal communication system is another major handicap. A family business has strong informal family communication that facilitates the business process but professional managers entering the family corporation may not be in the loop of the informal communications system.

A professional manager has to be committed to maximizing profits and shareholder value. In real life he may have to compromise for family-related decisions and considerations. Use of business assets for personal needs of owners can be an issue. Conflict in related party transactions could be another issue. Conflicting goals of owners can seriously affect strategic corporate decisions.

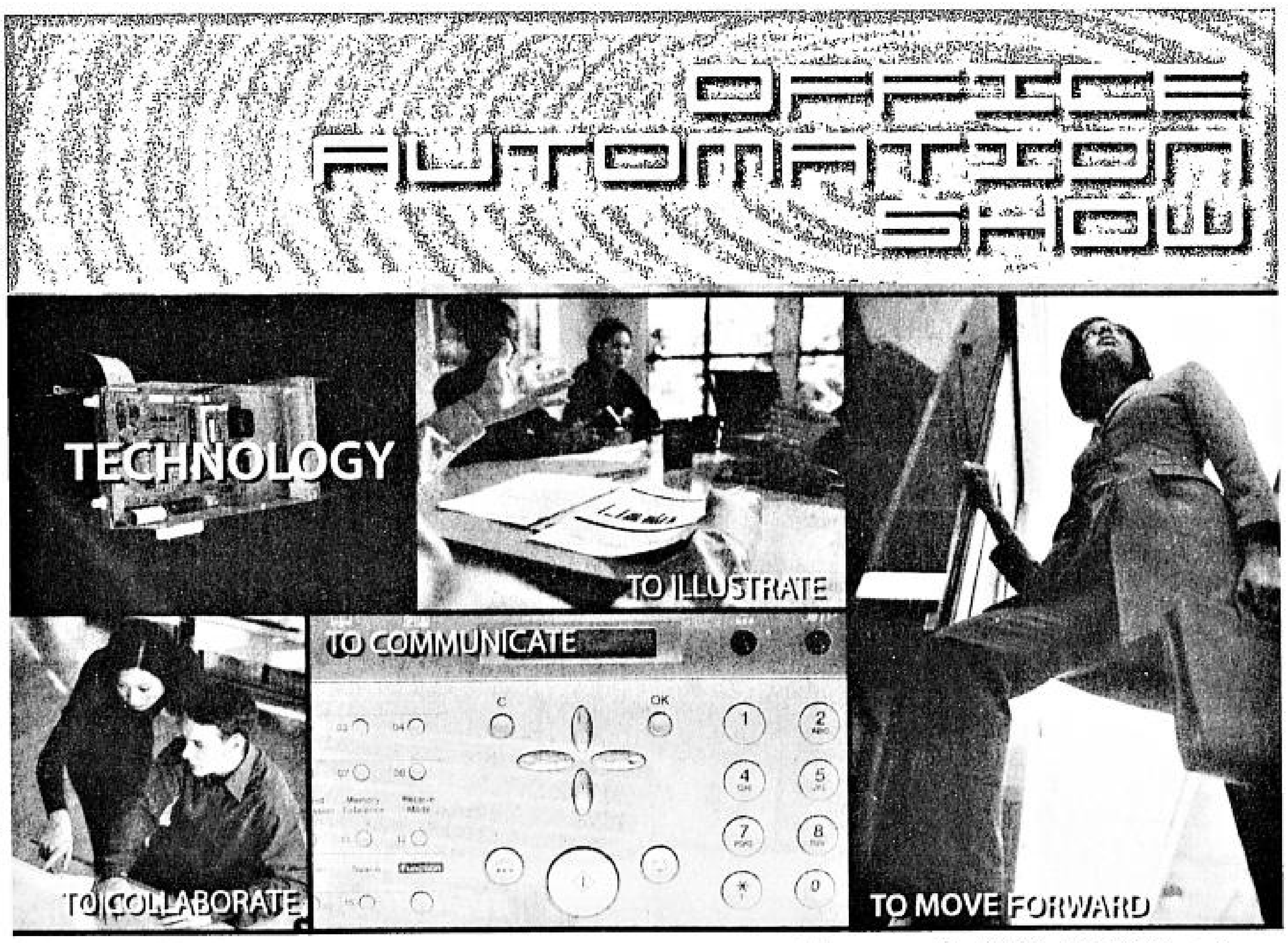
For a family business to make a transition toward professional management, it will be important to have prior understanding and agreement on potential conflict areas. Defining the acceptable limitations and standards affecting business optimization and family "favors" and obtaining approvals therefore greatly make the life of a professional manager less stressful.

Additionally, it is not safe to assume that everyone involved in the family business has a good understanding of the external and the internal factors that affect the operations and profitability of the business. The focus is often the present time operation and not on what has to be done now for the future. Some family enterprises can therefore be weak in understanding and knowing where the business is headed for.

It always helps if mechanisms are made ahead of time for conflict resolution. Family members participating in the preparation of written guidelines, defining rights and responsibilities of family members holding positions in the organization can become valuable in times of conflict.

Finally, we have to realize that the situation and circumstance of each family business are intrinsically different from one another. Each one will need a tailor-made solution toward professionalizing the business with one thought in mind. The only family businesses that have endured over time are those that have professionalized their businesses. Businesses that endure are organizations that metamorphosed from existing for the interest of the family to one where the organization's reason for being is to be truly of service to the community and society. Thus the dominant stakeholders transform from members of the family to those in the society that benefit from the existence of the corporate entity.

(The author is principal consultant of De Leon Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)



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What one learns in class is obsolete in five years

CONSTANT learning will be the key to success in the future.

What one learns in school is obsolete in five years; to cope with change, one needs seven critical skills.

In a global economy that is constantly in flux because of new information and technology, how does one stay ahead?

By primarily embracing the fact that one will have to be constantly learning and adapting to new innovations every few years, according to Romulo Romero, managing director of OTi Consulting, a firm operating in Manila, Singapore and other parts of the region.

Knowledge doubles at a pace of about every three years, according to studies cited by the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board.

This means that half of what one learns in school is obsolete in about five years, explains Romero who heads the Manila office of the regional management consultancy firm.

"The shortening life cycle of knowledge and skills means one will have to develop a set of critical skills that will allow the constant acquisition of new knowledge and ways of doing things," says the trainer who conducts OTi courses that help participants acquire these critical skills.

The Singapore-based company was recognized by the Singapore government for two years in a row as a leading provider of programs that enable the work force to meet the requirements of the knowledge economy.

According to Romero, these skills include: effective learning strategies; high proficiency in reading, writing and computation; and problem solving and creativity. In addition, the critical skills also cover old-fashioned abilities that gain new emphasis in flatter organizations, namely: listening and oral communication; taking personal responsibility for career and self-development; being a team player; and leadership.

Programs to acquire the seven skills have been called CREST or Critical Enabling Skills Training in Singapore. In fact, the Singaporean government has embarked on an ambitious program to upgrade its entire work force through CREST.

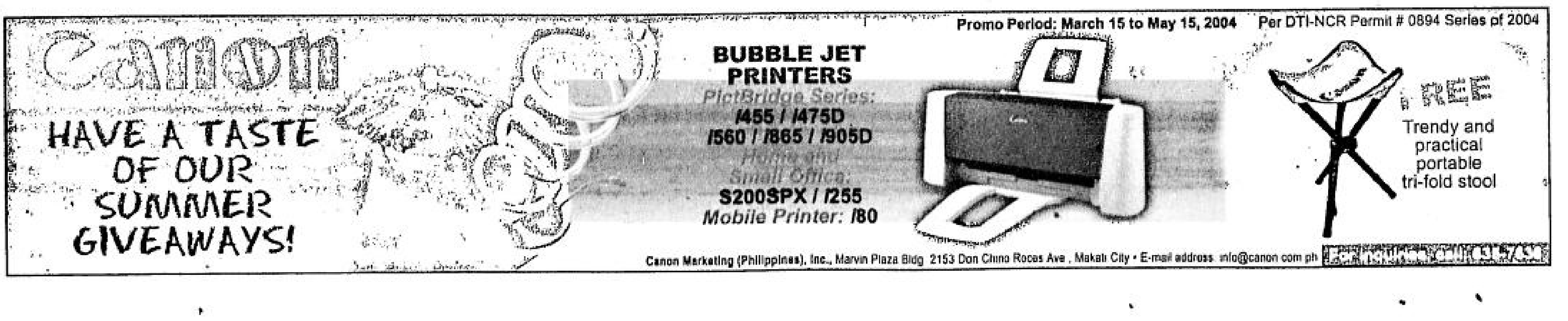
The importance of acquiring these seven skills required by the knowledge economy has also been validated by federations of human resource specialists in the US, Canada, Britain and Japan.

OTi consultant Mae Legaspi points out that because information is moving so fast, organizations can no longer just focus on training that simply highlights the transmittal of technical content.

"Content, after all, will change. What ought to remain constant is an openness to adapt to change," she says.

As described in OTi's website (www.oticonsulting.com), the company has developed learning instruments to measure one's skills in the seven areas. The company also shares strategies that allow for creativity and innovation.

WHAT ONE/ B2-3



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What one learns in class is obsolete in five years

From page B2-2

One such strategy, for instance, requires the participant to think contrary or opposite of the usual way of doing things.

When faced with the problem of undelivered documents to homeowners, for instance, a Singapore agency was encouraged to think out of the box. What is the usual way of delivering documents, participants were asked. During the day by a courier was their reply. Opposite thinking uncovered the effective strategy of delivering mail at night instead of during regular hours to households.

Romero discloses that OTi's CREST modules also encourage the participant to see himself within the context of the organization. Participants learn to effectively function within the institution taking into consideration the firm's goals, values and culture.

Outside of CREST, OTi likewise has projects that allow an organization to be more effective.

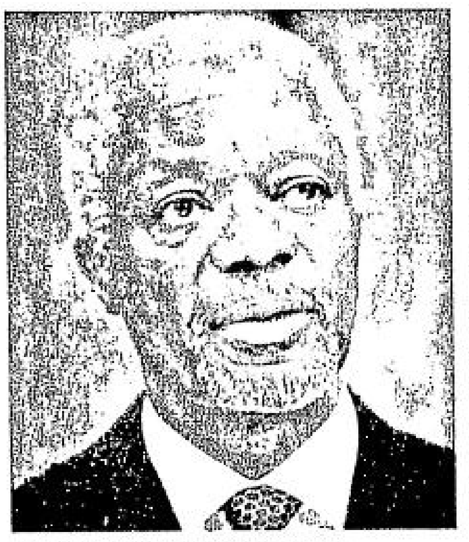
Says Romero: "We believe that an organization's strategic direction is influenced by its internal capabilities and infrastructure. OTi has the tools and processes to review an organization as an organic whole." In the face of rapid change, the "right" structures and systems make all the difference.

Adds Romero: "We believe that every organization has a purpose and destiny. In OTi we help them clarify that and bring it to fulfillment through effective strategy, culture and values. We have the tools and processes to help organizations understand where they are versus where they want to be and embark on the necessary steps to close the gaps."

According to Romero, "Learn, think and innovate" will be the battle cry of effective organizations in the new information era. He echoes futurist Alvin Toffler by pointing out that the illiterate of the 21st century will no longer just be those who cannot read and write, but also "those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

Unleashing . . .

From page B2-4



UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

tries? And how can the existing private sector be engaged in meeting that challenge?

The answers are contained in a March report, entitled "Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor."

'Underground' economy

The report said that one of the first actions is to create an enabling environment to reduce the share of the informal or "underground" sector in an economy.

Zedillo quotes Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, who explained that informal businesses, like the small traders or sari-sari store operators, are constrained to operate in very small markets, usually the local community.

Typically, the poorer a country is, the bigger the proportion of its overall economy will be held by its informal economy.

The report said the governments of developing countries could ease the entry of these "underground" economy players into the formal sector by leveling the playing field and giving them enough incentives to join the formal economy.

There are currently many constraints to entering the formal sector, the commission said, foremost of which is cost.

In most developing countries, it is costly to be formal. Formal players are often overtaxed and registering a business can be a long and expensive endeavor. Regulations and government requirements are complex and compliance costs are high.

With all these impediments, most entrepreneurs see little benefit in going formal. The commission said easing the burden is where governments should come in.

Partnership

The commission stressed that there are three factors that are indispensable for entrepreneurship and the private sector to flourish in an economy: a level playing field, access to finance and knowledge and skills.

Governments are tasked with providing the playing field but the participation of the private sector is crucial in providing the other two.

"The commission believes that all stakeholders need to make concerted efforts in finance, skills and public-private partnerships for the delivery of basic services," the report said.

Private firms could come in by helping small entrepreneurs understand the rudiments of the capital markets.

"The long-term goal should be to have private financial institutions supporting small and medium enterprises—and to encourage well functioning capital markets," the report said.

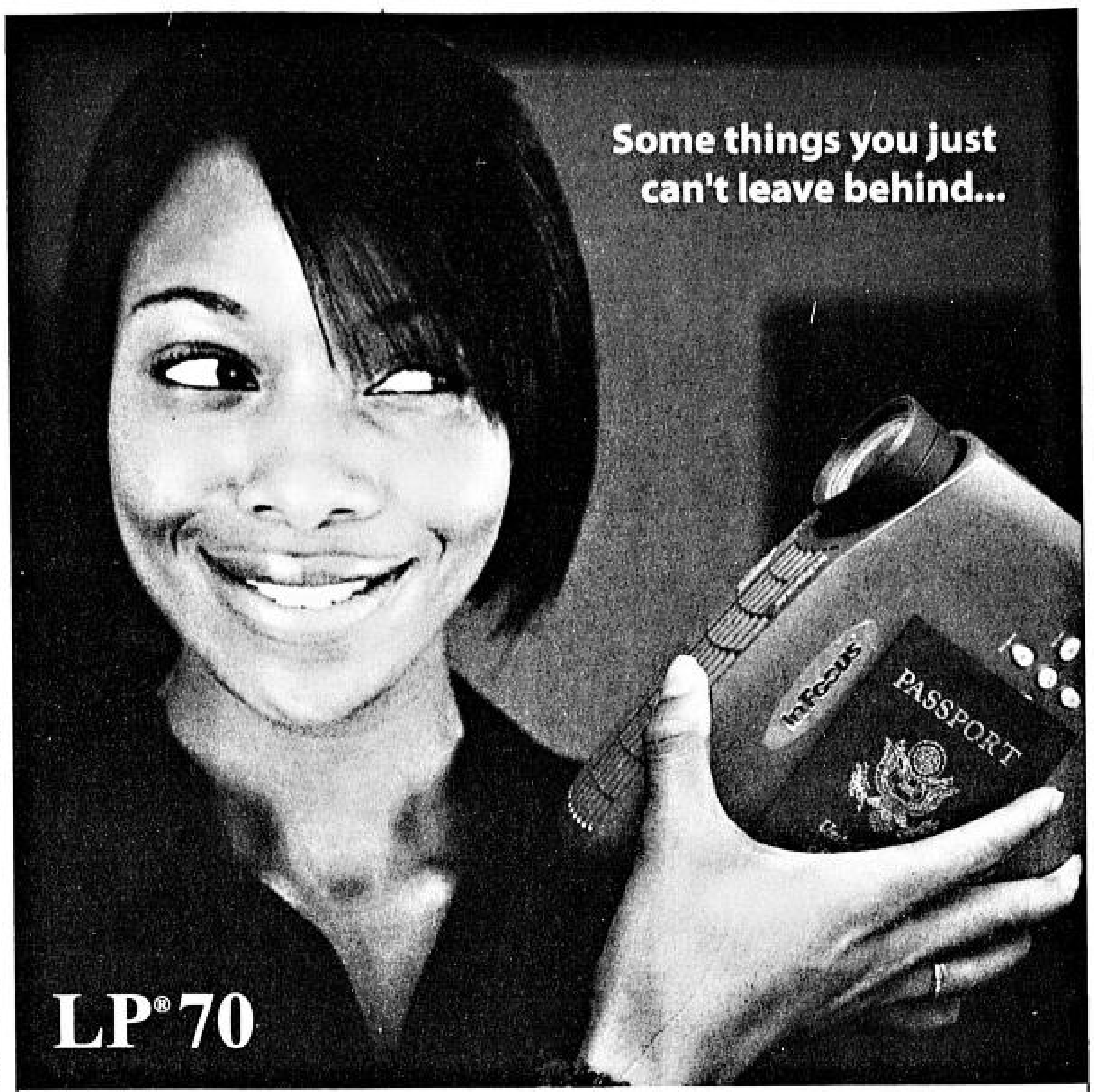
On enhancing knowledge and skills, the commission said that a country's foreign workers like the Philippines' overseas Filipino workers and professionals abroad could help by mentoring local entrepreneurs.

Expatriates in developing countries may also have skills that could be tapped for coaching and motivating local entrepreneurs.

The overarching principle is to get all parts of society involved—including labor groups and nongovernment organizations—in increasing the numbers of the people in the private sector involved in job creation and poverty alleviation.

"Recognizing the size and complexity of the challenge, the commission concludes that it is necessary to channel private capabilities and resources into unleashing the private sector in developing countries," the report said.

There is really no other choice as the report concludes that poverty will remain firmly entrenched in society and millennium goals to eradicate poverty mere pipe dreams unless the private sector unleashes its full potential.



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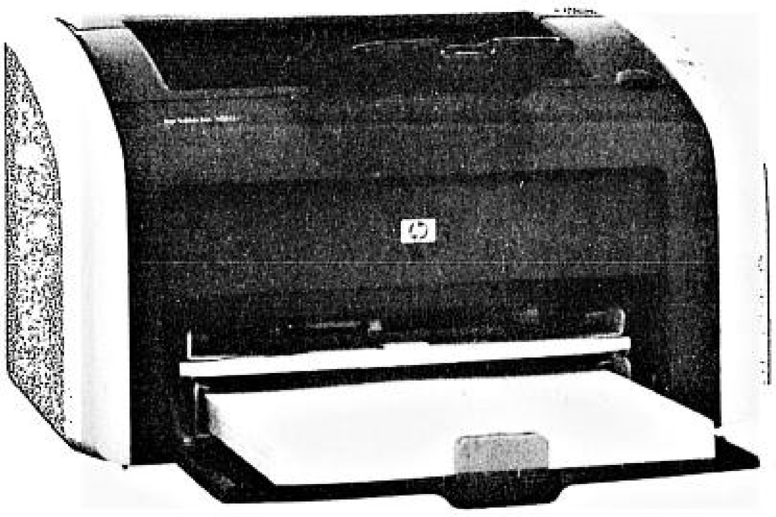

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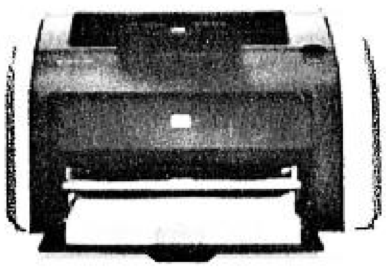

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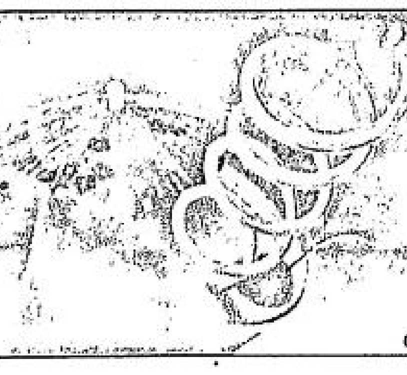

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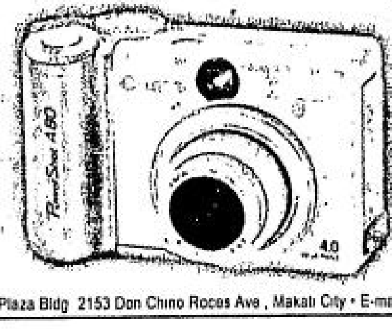

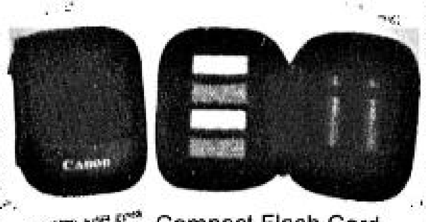

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Unleashing poor countries' entrepreneurship potentials

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

People, no matter how poor, are born entrepreneurs.

VISIT the most rural of barangays across the Philippines and you will see many villagers engaged in simple business activities—like tending a *sari-sari* store—to put food on the table.

Imagine then the potential of unleashing this entrepreneurial spirit on a larger scale, where small businessmen, most of whom have no formal knowledge of running a business, are encouraged to think bigger.

This has been the most fervent dream of governments and multilateral institutions that have always preached the theory that it is through economic development that poverty can truly be eradicated.

The problem, however, lies in the sad fact that while there is every intention to foster economic growth, there is a stronger force that maintains the status quo where only the multinationals and big business groups take part in business development.

As a result, one out of every five persons lives on less than $1 or P56 a day, despite the great economic progress over the past 50 years.

Finding the solutions to improve the living conditions of the majority of the population was the objective behind United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan's call to convene the Commission on the Private Sector and Development.

The commission, co-chaired by Canada Prime Minister Paul Martin and Former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, was convened to answer two questions: How can the potential of the private sector and entrepreneurship be unleashed in developing coun-

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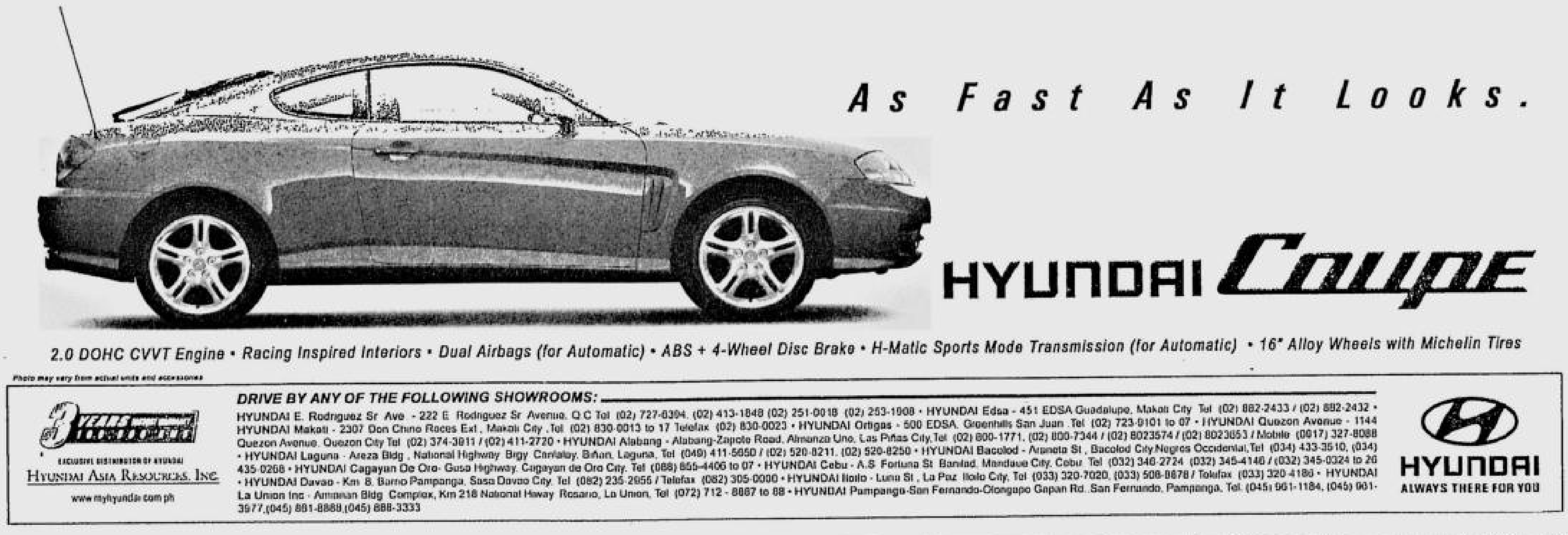
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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Amalia: Jealousy prompted custody fight for Niño's son

NIÑO, Edith and Zandro in happier times

By Marinel R. Cruz and Tina Santos

NIÑO Muhlach's wife filed for custody of their 2-year-old son because of jealousy, according to the actor's aunt, Amalia Fuentes.

"I think she filed the petition out of jealousy and not because she really wanted to get the child," the feisty Fuentes said of Edith Miliare, wife of her nephew, Niño. "She probably just wants to get back at Niño."

But Fuentes admitted that while Muhlach is now with a new partner, Miliare herself has been going out on dates as well.

"I think Edith is too young and immature to go into a serious relationship with Niño," Fuentes pointed out.

Fuentes also said that Muhlach's wife has no regular job that can enable her to raise and educate their son.

Muhlach and Miliare are fighting for custody of their son, Zandro. Miliare has asked the Quezon City regional trial court to grant her the exclusive custody of the boy, saying she is in a better position to take care of him.

But Fuentes said Miliare has no regular job and has been living in the house of her aunt and uncle since she left their Quezon City condominium unit last December.

"Although it's true that Niño cannot afford to live on his income, he has his father, Alex, who is my brother, to take care of his needs and those of Zandro's," Fuentes told INQUIRER Entertainment on Saturday.

Both of Miliare's parents are living in the United States, according to Fuentes.

"When Niño and Edith got married, Alex gave them two units at El Niño (Apartelle)," said Fuentes. "Alex pays for their child's needs. A few years back, he even volunteered to shoulder Edith's school expenses when she decided to go to college."

Alex Muhlach, a businessman, built El Niño Apartelle on N. Domingo Street in Quezon City in the 1980s, said Fuentes. It was the family's main source of income for many years until Alex Muhlach's Megamelt bakery franchise became established.

In a petition for custody of minor, Miliare said that she was forced to seek sole custody of Zandro after her actor husband allowed his alleged girlfriend to live with him in their conjugal unit at the El Niño Apartelle.

The child has been staying with his actor father, Angelo Jose Rocha Muhlach in real life, at the condominium unit since Muhlach and Miliare separated Dec. 5, 2003, INQUIRER Entertainment learned.

Miliare told the court that her husband Muhlach has been "openly committing immoral, indecent and scandalous acts with his girlfriend" and sleeping in their matrimonial bed.

"This condemnable situation is even aggravated by the fact that my child is at his most utmost curious and impressionable age," Miliare added.

Miscarriage

She noted that the circumstances would have "grave negative effect on the psychological, social and moral upbringing and development of the child" if the present arrangement continues.

Records show that Muhlach and Miliare were married on Dec. 17, 2000 in Jaro, Iloilo. Miliare had just turned 18 then.

Miliare told the court that she was forced to leave their conjugal home because of the allegedly habitual physical violence that Muhlach inflicted on her. She also accused him of using illegal drugs and of womanizing.

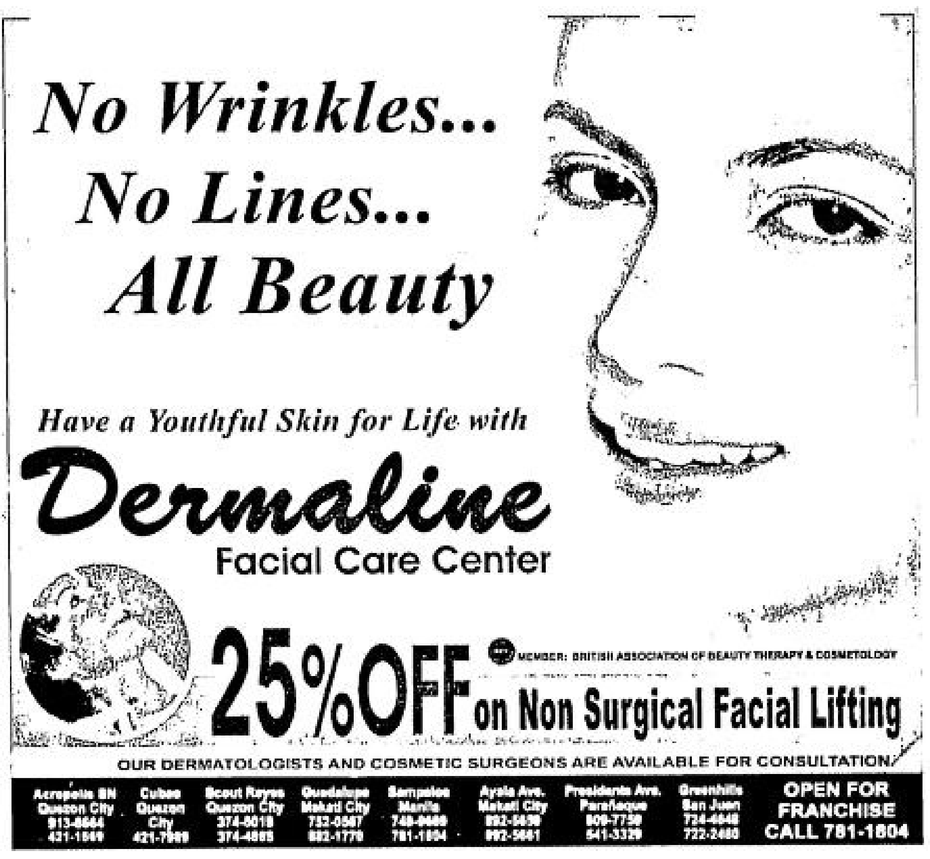
She claimed she suffered a miscarriage on June 25, 2002 due to "heavy physical, emotional and mental stress."

INQUIRER Entertainment tried to reach the actor for comment but he was unavailable.

"Niño is very different from her," Fuentes said of Miliare. "He'll just keep quiet even if Edith is badmouthing him."

FUENTES: Niño's wife too young and immature to have a relationship with an actor

JM GUIAO PUNZALAN



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Anti-Vilma billboards sprout in Lipa

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LIPA CITY—"Wanted: Full-time mayor" is the message on giant billboards erected all over this city and in thousands of posters on the electric posts, walls, trees and in every spot where residents would most likely see them.

The illustration on about 50 billboards standing along the main thoroughfares of Lipa is the silhouette of a man against a big clock as backdrop. Written in red bold letters above the silhouette is the word "wanted." The full message is on the man's chest: "full-time mayor." The same message is also on the posters.

The outdoor advertising is an apparent attack against incumbent Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos, who still finds time to star in movies. But according to former mayor Ruben Umali, the message expresses the need of the people.

Youth group's initiative

"The posters speak of the truth that Lipa really needs a full-time mayor, not a part-time mayor. And definitely not the kind of mayor who only comes to city hall on Monday for the opening flag ceremony, then leaves the city soon after that, and returns again on Friday afternoon, in time for the closing flag ceremony," said Umali, who is running against Santos. "Lipa doesn't need a part-time mayor."

The INQUIRER tried to get Santos' reaction to the billboards but she wasn't at her office.

One of the staffers said Santos was out for barangay visits.

The billboards were put up by the Alyansa ng Nagkakaisang Aktibong Kabataan (Anak) ng Lipa, a youth association of the city that wants change in the city hall and a full-time mayor to serve the constituents, said Umali.

He denied that he's behind these materials, but admitted that he liked "what they did."

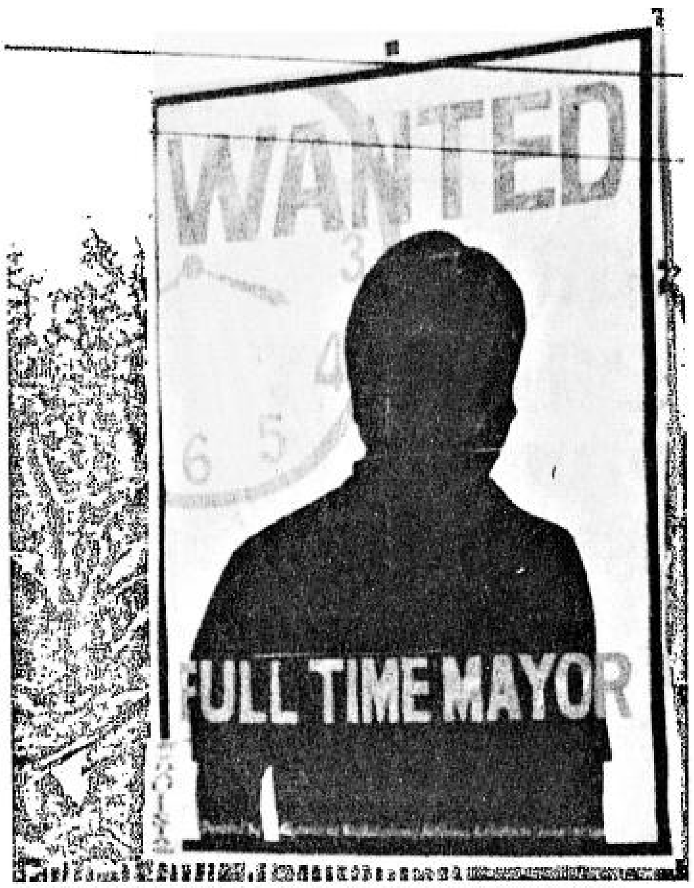
"It just shows that the Lipeños are now stressing their right to freely choose a full-time mayor. Those billboards are erected not just for me, but for all the other mayoral candidates who are running against Vilma," Umali said.

Silhouette

The question of how long or how short does Santos spend as mayor has long been unanswered by the incumbent mayor and her husband, Sen. Ralph Recto.

"Why can't they answer this question? Has the mayor been serving full-time or part-time only? It seems that this question has been hanging too long with no answer," Umali said.

But Santos' other rival, Mar Panganiban, a lawyer, said the billboards were put up by Umali's people.



'WANTED: Full-time mayor' expresses the need of the people, according to former Lipa City Mayor Ruben Umali, who is running against incumbent Vilma Santos. MEI MAGSINO

"I believe it was Umali's handiwork, based on the silhouette that looks like him. Second, when the billboards were put up on March 21, Sunday night, the people at the market who saw the activity informed me that Umali's men were the ones putting up the billboards. And a few days after that, posters with his photo and the words 'full-time mayor' were posted in Lipa," he said.

Panganiban, who used to have a morning radio program, said he was the first to react on air about the billboards.

"Over the radio, I said that if Lipa is looking for a full-time mayor, I'll be the first one to apply for the position, but not just as full-time, I can be an overtime mayor with no overtime fees," Panganiban said. "In fairness to Mayor Vi, she never denied being a part-time mayor."

Panganiban had stopped his radio work last March 25.

Santos' other rival Mel Mantuanois is head of a foundation in the city.

Hanging on Ralph

Another poster has the pictures of city councilors forming a circle like the numbers on a clock, and Santos and Rector at the bottom of it. Santos was shown hanging on Recto's right shoulder. The senator is not a reelectionist, but his pictures and billboards are all over the city.

The couple's faces are even on two giant billboards on both sides of the city hall patio.

Scriptwriting workshop participants

THIRTY-SEVEN applicants have been chosen to participate in the 2nd ABS-CBN Scriptwriting Workshop to be conducted by Ricky Lee. The participants were chosen from 4,254 applicants last year.

The workshop started on Saturday and would continue until August.

The participants are: Astillero, Randy; Aurella, Erwin; Bisoy Hiyasmin; Bunda, Mark Anthony; Burgos, Henry; Calalang, Danilo Niño; Castro, Karl Frederick; Chico, Mark Lester; Chinilla, Nilo; Chiu, Dennis; David, April R; Denzo, Nippon; Despabiladeras, Jeffrey; Diez, Michael; Dimagan, Jean Louise; Fernandez, Denmark; Grageda, Joanna Manelle; Guela, Kristofferson; Javier, Alfonso Bonifacio III; Lomarquez, Michelle; Lopez, Joan Jelica; Lucasan, Kathleen; Martinez, Erwin; Nepomuceno, Epiphanie Camille; Orolfo, Jonathan; Pellena, Vicencio; Prado, Ronald; Quiambao, Jarold; Sacdalan, Ethel; Samson, Lady Marielle; Santisteban, John Kennedy; Santos, Rosario Ann; Tajar, Fahima; Tibay, Ryan; Tuason, John Joseph; Tumamao Geomilie; and Tuppal, Anne Loraine.

Mel Tiangco renews GMA contract

BROADCASTER Mel Tiangco has signed a two-year exclusive contract with GMA-7. Mel is also executive director of GMA Kapuso Foundation. She anchors the top-rating "24 Oras," and hosts the drama anthology "Magpakailanman," featuring true-life stories of celebrities.

Ali Sotto joins ABC's 'Sentro'

ACTRESS-SINGER Ali Sotto has joined ABC's broadcast team as anchor of "Sentro," the network's flagship news program. Co-anchor is John Susi. "Sentro," which airs at 5:30 p.m., offers a twist with its unique story-telling format that takes the viewer into the scene of each story.

Disney Channel up for 9 Emmys

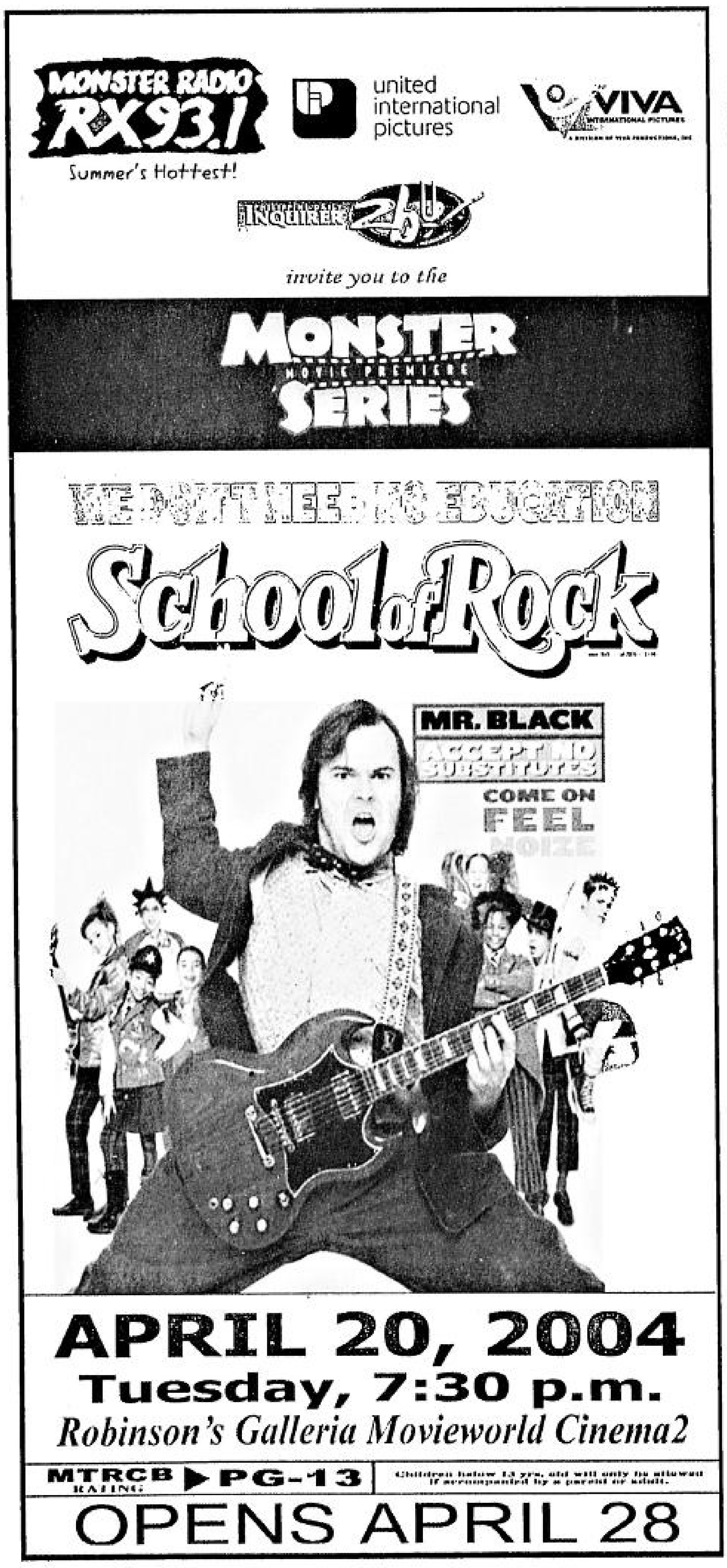
DISNEY Channel has bagged 9 nominations for the 2003-2004 Daytime Emmy Awards. This is the most number of nominations that a pay-TV network has received so far. The nominations were for Bear in the "Big Blue House" "Kim Possible," "Rolie Polie Olie," and "Out of the Box." The three shows are all key components of "Playhouse Disney," a daily programming block that encourages pre-schoolers to imagine and learn through original series, interstitials and acquired programming that encompass song, movement and entertainment. Emmy-award winning programming already on Disney Channel include "Even Stevens" (2003), "Madeline" (2002) and "Stanley (2002).

Sex in Philippine Cinema

SEX goddesses Rosanna Roces, Joyce Jimenez, Patricia Javier, Sunshine Cruz, Rica Peralejo, Maui Taylor, Maureen Larrazabal, Amanda Page, Ynez Veneracion, Daniella, Raven Villanueva and Rufa Mae Quinto are featured in an eclectic parade of sex scenes in "Sex in Philippine Cinema."

The video anthology compiles the best roles portrayed by these sexy stars, most of whom are now respected actresses in the industry.

Hosted by Ogie Diaz is a smorgasbord of beauties in bite-size clips from their steamiest and most scorching movies. A virtual raunchfest, "Sex in Philippine Cinema" is available in VCD and DVD.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Bad year for Michael and Janet

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT LOOKS like it's going to be a bad year for the Jacksons, **Michael** and **Janet**. Michael is facing possible child molestation charges, while Janet's career is suffering from the aftershocks of her "costume malfunction" booboo on TV last year.

If Janet thought up the sexy stunt to add more sizzle to her guest appearance with **Justin Timberlake** on TV's big Super Bowl special, she miscalculated badly, because the major sports event was the least appropriate venue for such a naughty prank.

As a veteran show biz observer put it, the Super Bowl is one of the sports world's most revered events, so fooling around with it could really rile up the crowd. No wonder, some 250,000 irate people called up to complain about Janet's "accident."

The reaction was so negative that the singer's career is still reeling from her stunt's repercussions to this day. Concert dates and recording plans may have to be adjusted or abridged as Janet is put in the deep freeze—hopefully, not permanently.

Lessons to be learned? Show biz may be a fantasy world where technological smoke and mirrors are used to keep fans beguiled, but there are limits to audience manipulation.

And, in Michael's case, entertainers must perforce regard themselves as role models, and live their private lives with the public's standards constantly in mind. Failing that, they should be prepared to reap the whirlwind.

Ms **Bernadette Cortez** of Angeles, Pampanga shares some of her wonderful discoveries as an inveterate film buff and channel-surfer:

"Check out those Japanese cable channels! Both Wowow and NHKZ air many European and Asian films. One week, they featured almost all of the movies of **Woody Allen**. Another week, those of **Ken Russell**. A third week, **Jim Jarmusch**'s.

"Wowow movies usually start at 7 or 8 p.m. and, barring any sports or musical specials, run to the following whole day. NHK plays them at 8 p.m. and midnight (or a half-hour later). The programming on this channel is fickle, though. Note: The movies shown on both channels are generally uncut. They are not for the squeamish.

"Another tip: Star World is where I discovered 'The X-Files! Its lights have dimmed, but I'll see it through its last season. We also watched pre-'Mask of Zorro' **Catherine Zeta-Jones** in 'The Darling Buds of May,' a delightful British family sitcom.

"Current shows worth considering: '3rd Rock from the Sun' (hilarious aliens checking out the earth); 'The Oprah Winfrey Show' (if only for its host's effervescence); 'The Simpsons' (extremely adult satire in animation); 'Whose Line Is It Anyway?' (brilliant improv), and 'Monk' (sort of a male Jessica Fletcher with an obsessive-compulsive malady).

"As a child, I loved watching Tagalog film classics in the afternoon on TV. Today, I watch them again on Pinoy Box Office. This station also screens the glossy dramas of the first half of the '80s (I especially like the **Christopher-Vilma** starrers). Also choice are films by **Tikoy Aguiluz** and **Celso Ad Castillo**.

"But it is Cinema One that houses the greatest Filipino films ever made. Here are the masterpieces of **Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal, Eddie Romero, Peque Gallaga, Mike de Leon, Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Laurice Guillen, Gil Portes, Mario O'Hara, Mel Chionglo, Chito Roño, Joel Lamangan, Jose Javier Reyes, Maryo J. de los Reyes, Carlitos Siguion-Reyna** and **Raymond Red**.

"Cult films like **Joey Gosiengfiao**'s 'Temptation Island' also abound, as well as fairly recent Star Cinema releases.

"The movies on Cinemax are less mainstream than those on HBO. A few years ago, it held an Asian Film Festival. Count on this channel to serve up delectable, quirky and small films like 'Love Serenade,' 'To Have and to Hold' and 'The Navigator.'

"Aficionados of the Western genre would also be glutted with all stages of **John Wayne** and **Clint Eastwood**. I believe it also has a complete library of **Alfred Hitchcock** flicks, which pleases me no end.

"I am in awe of the science of genes and the techniques in forensics, so I'm an avid viewer of Discovery Channel's 'Medical Detectives' and 'The New Detectives, and AXN's 'C.S.I.'

"Other Discovery Channel shows of interest are 'Ancient History,' 'Civilizations,' 'Archeology,' 'Paleoworld' and 'Splendors of the Ancient World.'

(To be continued.)

New body gives Dolphy lifetime achievement award

COMEDIAN Dolphy is the first recipient of the Gawad Lino Brocka, the lifetime achievement award from the new body that calls itself the Entertainment Press Society.

The comedian will receive the award during the first Golden Screen Awards on April 24 at the Meralco Theater.

For the group's first batch of awards, the nominees are:

Best Motion Picture (Drama): "Homecoming," "Filipinas," "Magnifico," "Mano Po 2," "The Debut."

Best Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy): "Ang Tanging Ina," "Bridal Shower," "Crying Ladies," "Kung Ako na Lang Sana," "Pangarap Ko ang Ibigin Ka."

Best Actress (Drama): Ara Mina ("Ang Huling Birhen sa Lupa"), Elizabeth Oropesa ("Homecoming"), Zsa Zsa Padilla ("Mano Po 2"), Maricel Soriano ("Filipinas"), Lorna Tolentino ("Magnifico");

Best Actress (Musical or Comedy): Ai-Ai de las Alas ("Ang Tanging Ina"), Dina Bonnevie ("Bridal Shower"), Sharon Cuneta ("Kung Ako na Lang Sana"), Cherry Pie Picache ("Bridal Shower"), Regine Velasquez ("Pangarap Ko ang Ibigin Ka");

Best Actor (Drama): Raymond Bagatsing ("Sukdulan"), Richard Gomez ("Filipinas"), Christopher de Leon ("Mano Po 2"), Jiro Manio ("Magnifico"), Albert Martinez ("Magnifico");

Best Actor (Musical or Comedy): Christopher de Leon ("Pangarap Ko ang Ibigin Ka"), Aga Muhlach ("Kung Ako na Lang Sana");

Best Supporting Actress (Drama, Musical or Comedy): Hilda Koronel ("Crying Ladies"), Isabella de Leon ("Magnifico"), Gloria Romero ("Magnifico"), Judy Ann Santos ("Mano Po 2"), Jennifer Sevilla ("Kung Ako na Lang Sana"), Carmina Villaroel ("Mano Po 2");

Best Supporting Actor (Drama, Musical or Comedy): Tirso Cruz III ("The Debut"), Jay Manalo ("Mano Po 2"), Victor Neri ("Filipinas"), Eric Quizon ("Crying Ladies");

Breakthrough Performance by an Actress: Christine Bersola ("Kung Ako na Lang Sana"), Sarah Geronimo ("Filipinas"), Katherine Luna ("Babae sa Breakwater"), Juliana Palermo ("www.XXX.com"), Miriam Quiambao ("Walang Kapalit");

Breakthrough Performance by an Actor: Paolo Bediones ("Walang Kapalit"), Kristoffer King ("Babae sa Breakwater"), Julio Pacheco ("Crying Ladies"), Alfred Vargas ("Bridal Shower");

Best Director: Gene Cajayon ("The Debut"), Jeffrey Jeturian ("Bridal Shower"), Joel Lamangan ("Filipinas"), Jose Javier Reyes ("Kung Ako na Lang Sana"), Maryo J. de los Reyes ("Magnifico");

Best Original Screenplay: Gene Cajayon and John Manal Castro ("The Debut"), Roy Iglesias ("Filipinas"), Chris Martinez ("Bridal Shower"), Jose Javier Reyes ("Kung Ako na Lang Sana"), Michiko Yamamoto ("Magnifico").

ABS-CBN wants GMA 7 punished over 'false' Dolphy reports

By Clarissa S. Batino

ABS-CBN has asked the National Telecommunications Commission to penalize GMA Network for allegedly misleading the public with its "false and malicious reporting" on the issue involving comedy king Dolphy.

In a complaint to the NTC dated April 6, the Lopez-controlled network claimed that GMA violated its franchise when it reported in its news programs "24 Oras" and "Saksi" that Dolphy's "Home Along Da Airport" would be axed because the comedian was actively campaigning for presidential candidate and fellow actor Fernando Poe Jr.

According to ABS-CBN's complaint, GMA also reported that the planned cancellation of Dolphy's show was part of a deal allegedly struck by the Lopezes with Malacañang in exchange for the government decision to take over Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The water company of the Lopez Group would reportedly save about P2.5 billion in the compromise deal with the Macapagal administration.

"In the March 22, 2004 episode of both '24 Oras' and 'Saksi,' GMA falsely reported that ABS-CBN is about to cancel 'Home Along Da Airport,' featuring Mr. Rodolfo Quizon (Dolphy)," Danilo Morales, ABS-CBN vice president and legal counsel, said in a letter to NTC chair Ronald Solis. "It was made to appear that the reason for the alleged cancellation of the program was the campaigning of Mr. Quizon for Mr. Poe, and that this was part of a deal with Malacañang in connection with the Maynilad compromise agreement.

"It was also reported that ABS-CBN covered up the reason for the cancellation by making it appear that the alleged low rating of the said program was the cause of the alleged cancellation, and that Mr. Poe's camp and people in the entertainment industry believed that politics was the cause of the alleged cancellation."

Malicious slant

GMA said it would respond to ABS-CBN's allegations today. Butch Raquel, GMA head of corporate communications, said GMA needed more time to study the complaint of the competitor.

ABS-CBN VP and legal counsel Danilo Morales said GMA never cited any source and made no effort to confirm these allegations with ABS-CBN even after the Lopez network made a public announcement that Dolphy's show was not going to be canceled.

Morales said "GMA quoted statements out of context to suit the malicious slant of its story against ABS-CBN and made statements of fact in its reports despite knowing they are not true."

"It cannot be denied that GMA is one of ABS-CBN's competitors in the broadcast industry," Morales said . "Thus, it is understandable for GMA to believe that it will benefit from making reports that will put ABS-CBN or its management in a bad light. However, GMA should be reminded that its primary concern should be its responsibility to give the public true, accurate and impartial reports."

Franchise violation

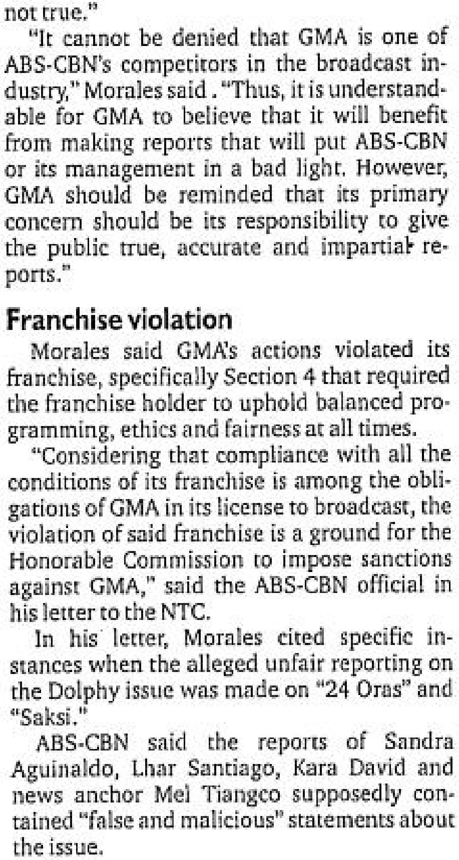
Morales said GMA's actions violated its franchise, specifically Section 4 that required the franchise holder to uphold balanced programming, ethics and fairness at all times.

"Considering that compliance with all the conditions of its franchise is among the obligations of GMA in its license to broadcast, the violation of said franchise is a ground for the Honorable Commission to impose sanctions against GMA," said the ABS-CBN official in his letter to the NTC.

In his letter, Morales cited specific instances when the alleged unfair reporting on the Dolphy issue was made on "24 Oras" and "Saksi."

ABS-CBN said the reports of Sandra Aguinaldo, Lhar Santiago, Kara David and news anchor Mel Tiangco supposedly contained "false and malicious" statements about the issue.

The Lopez network also contested the claims of GMA that "Home Along Da Airport" was losing in the ratings game against "Idol ko si Kap," Bong Revilla's show on GMA Channel 7.



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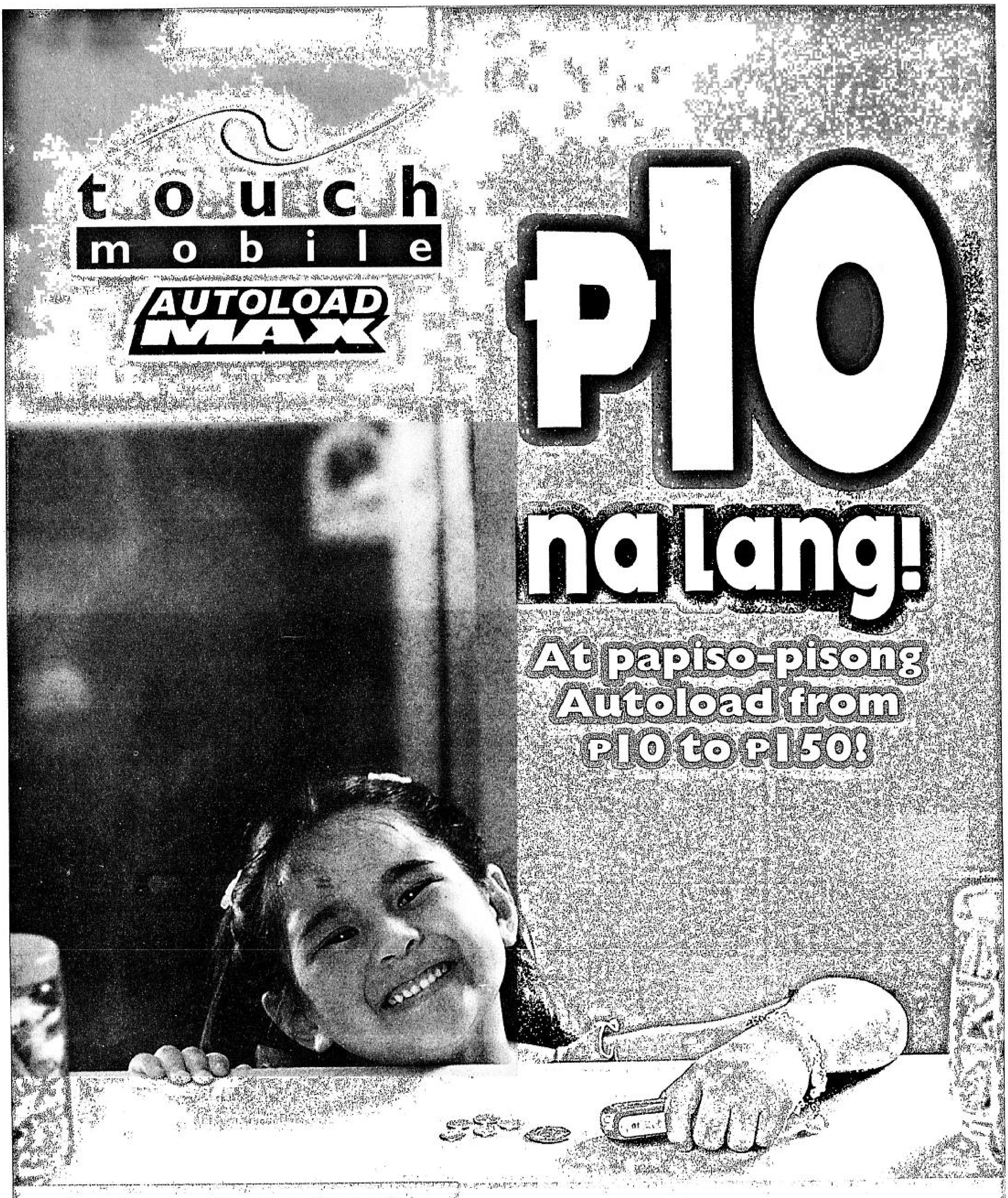

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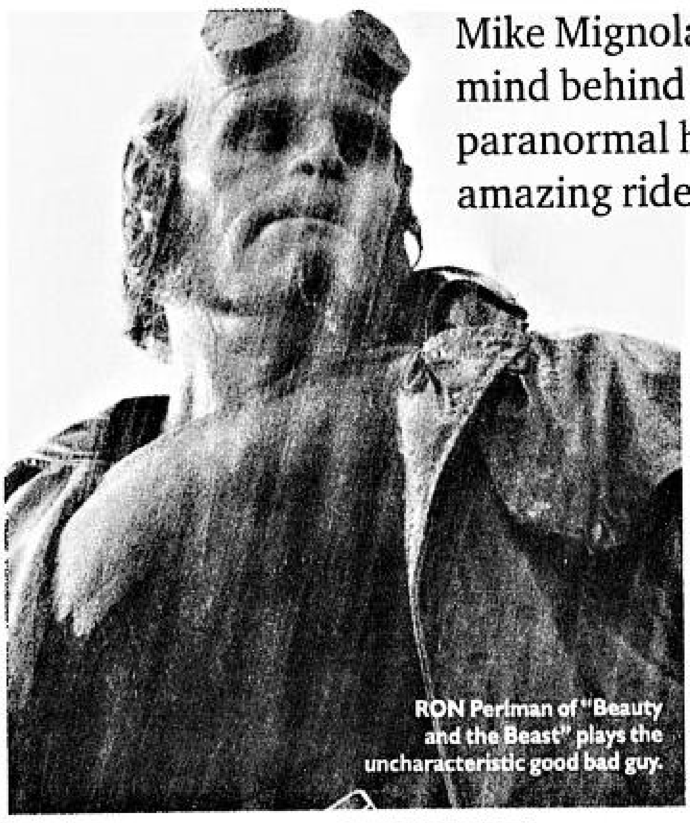

RON Perlman of "Beauty and the Beast" plays the uncharacteristic good bad guy.

Mike Mignola, the award-winning mind behind the movie-bound paranormal hero, talks about the amazing ride from comic book to film

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Raising 'Hellboy'

By Ruel S. De Vera

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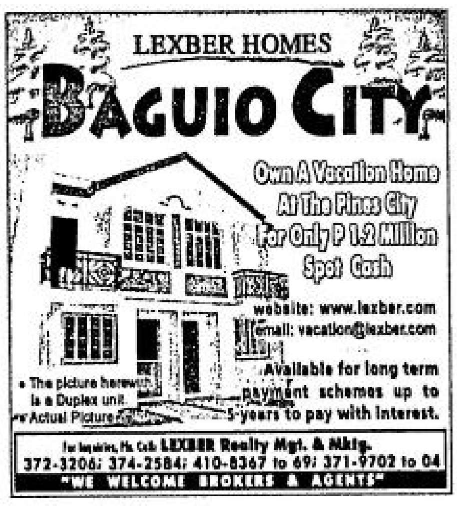

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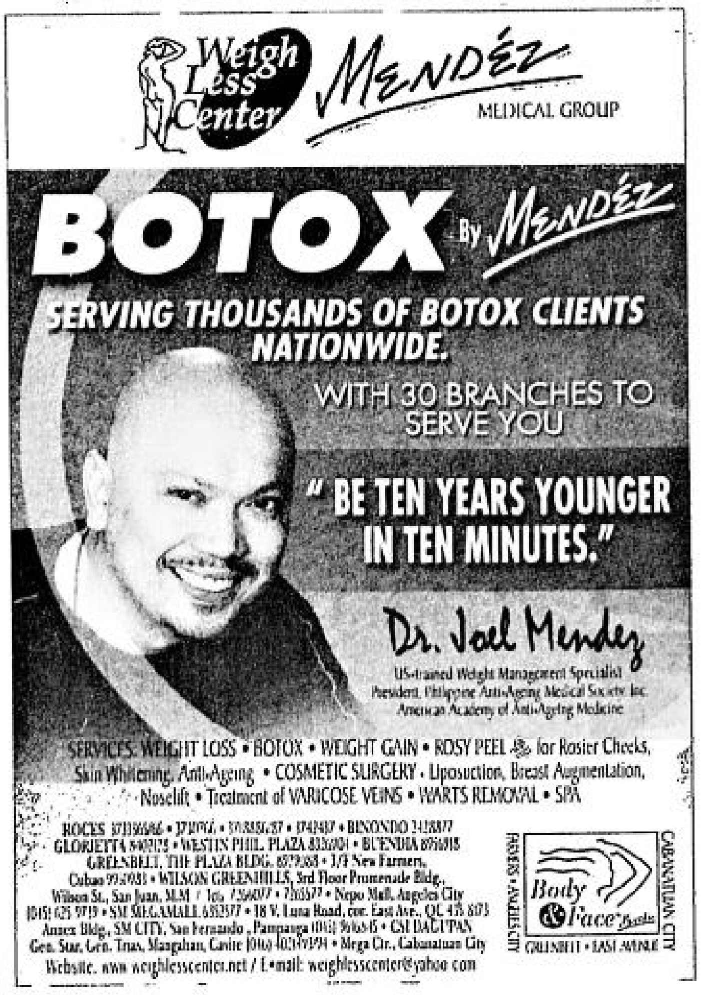

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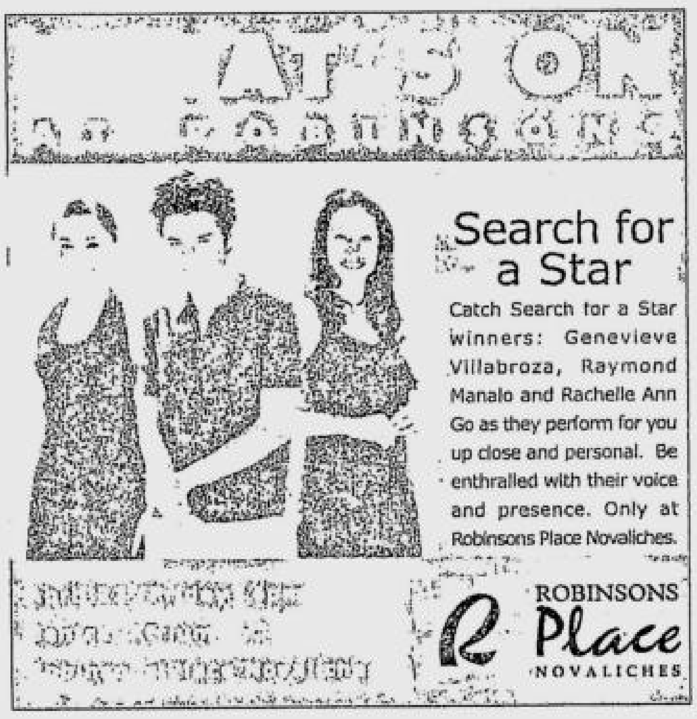

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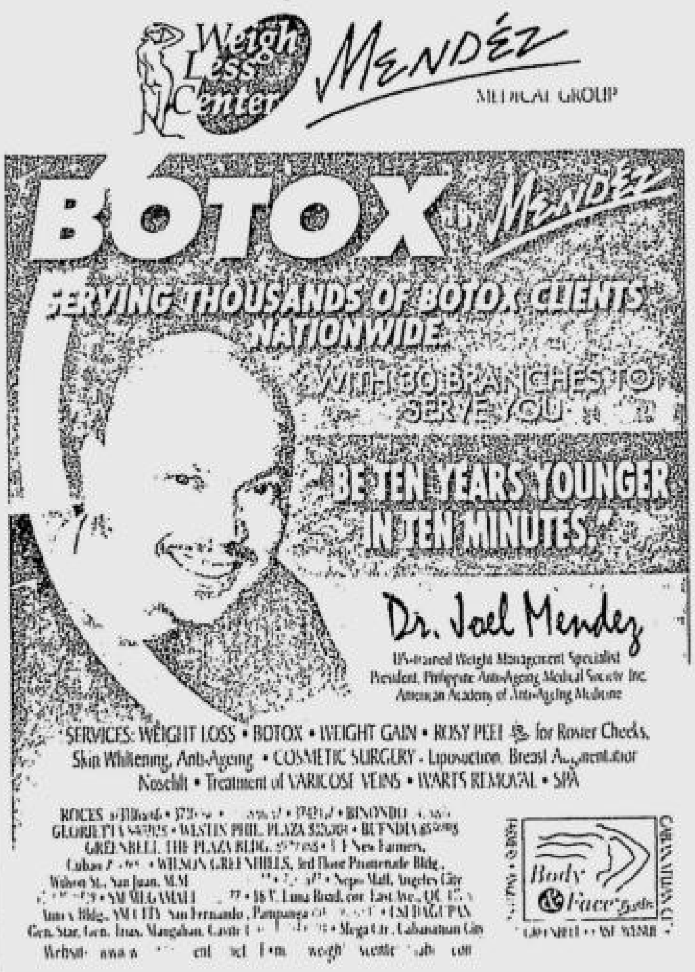

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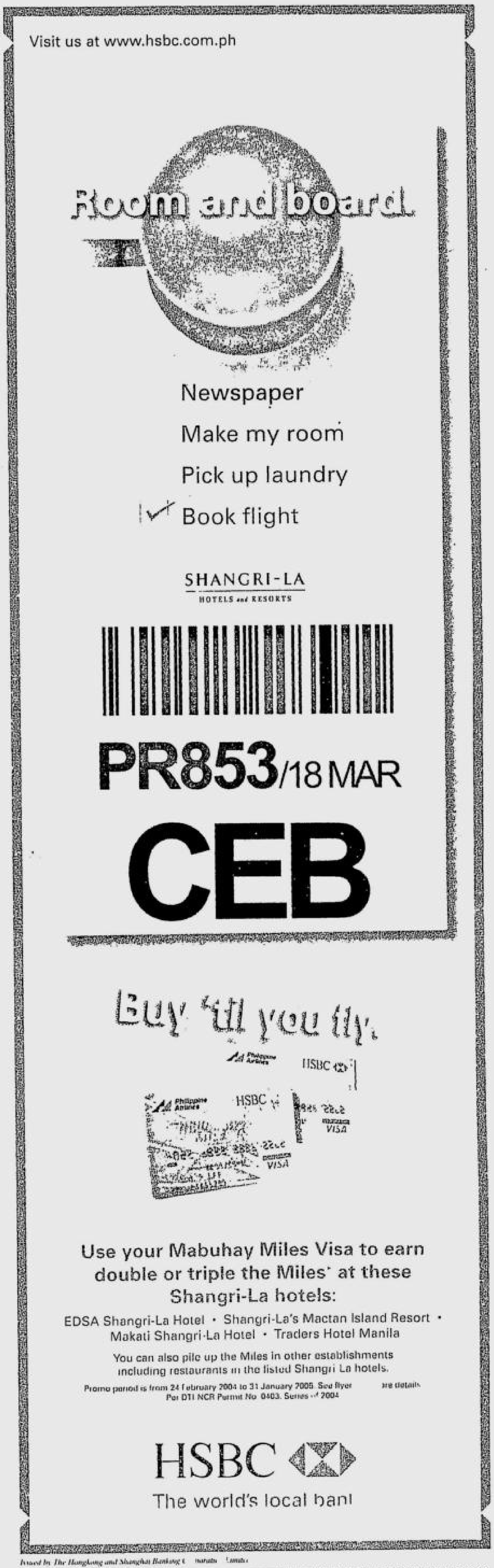

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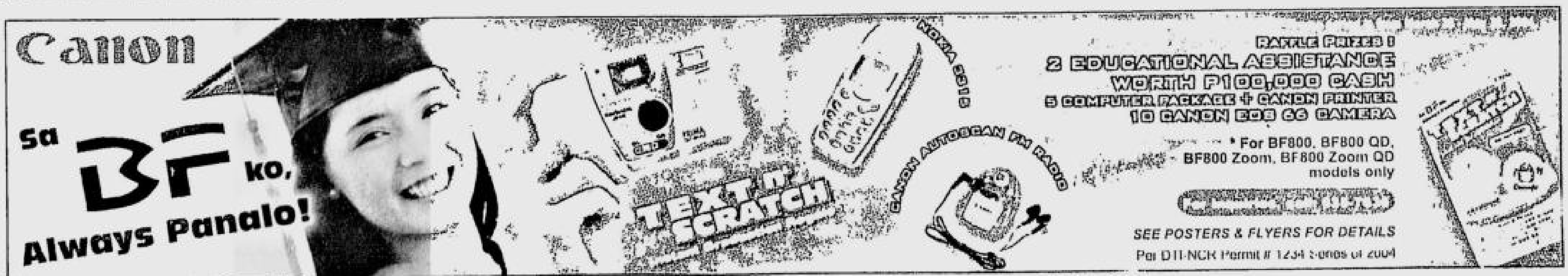

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PHILAM

OLYMPIC STANDARD

We came. We saw. We conquered!

It's another year of the Games (as the quadrennial Olympic competition is commonly known around the globe) and Greece is frantically sprucing up the Parthenon as they host the world's mos its 28th incarnation, the modern Olympiad returns to its ancient birthplace. Meanwhile, in another milieu, marketing organizations take advantage of the free promotion of the Olympic even theme. Why not? Give the Olympian motif a slight tweak here and there, drop the balloons from the ceiling as droves of gung ho salesmen shout their battle cry and presto! You have yourself

Philam Plans at fifteen is setting the standard in the pre-need industry, against whom all other companies' performances are measured. This is not to say, it's perfect. Its very competent mana go before they achieve all that they intend to be. In fact, it is in recognizing that perfection is always slightly out of reach that it seeks to surpass its previous accomplishments all the time.

Here is where the Olympic theme "Higher. Faster. Stronger." and Philam Plans' constant quest for excellence fit to a T. As President and CEO Jesus Hofileña puts it, "The ancient kingdom of of their influence, the Greeks dominated civilization. They believed in a glorious destiny and became global players. Though small in number, they achieved feats beyond expectations. All th fine attributes with the ancient Greeks, who introduced a healthier way of conquest by seeking perfection through athletic competition. We also dominate our part of the business world an determined to succeed as well as to grow our influence. We are not the largest in numbers, but our results readily exceed the performance of other companies double our size. Like the ancie adopting the Olympic theme was a deliberate choice, not a free ride. But don't let me convince you, let our record speak for itself."

First Among Equals

In the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of its operations, Philam Plans has garnered the following "firsts" in its fifteen years of existence:

· In 1994, five years after its first full year of operation, Philam Plans breached the billion-peso mark with P1.7 billion in gross sales. It became the first pre-need company to do so in as many years.

· In 1995, after only six years in operation it captured the number one position, beating out pioneering pre-need companies operating for fifteen to twenty five years.

· In 1998, it became the first pre-need company to earn its ISO 9002 certification, proof of its world-class capabilities and compliance to internationally recognized quality management standards.

· In 1999, it was the first pre-need company to be 2000-compliant, ensuring the security and safety of operationally critical information systems.

· In 2000, it became the first pre-need company to be a Life Office Management Association (LOMA) member, a prestigious worldwide organization of life insurance and financial services companies that gave its members training in different areas of the business. Based on the number of employees taking up LOMA and passing their exams, Philam Plans received international recognition for educational excellence.

· In 2001, when Philam Plans breached the one billion mark for first year payments, it became the first company, in the pre-need and insurance industries, thus far, to accomplish such a formidable feat in a little over a decade.

· In 2002 and 2003, Philam Plans captured the leadership position proving once again its preeminence in the pre-need industry.

Excellence Amidst Crises

Last year, despite the depressed economy and the pre-need market contracting 13.63%, Philam Plans held on to the top position two years running and recorded some pretty impressive achievements in the areas of sales, marketing and marketing support.

· It cornered 21.7% of market share for all plans with over seven billion pesos in pre-need sales. When considering that the pre-need industry is composed of 38-odd companies, this is one mean feat.

It led in pension with about four and half billion in sales and 25.65% of the market. Philam Plans has led pension sales for 5 straight years and is touted as the team to beat in this product segment.

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In other areas, Philam Plans continuously fine-tuned its processes to enhance customer service such as:

· Improving agency leaders' easy access to funds to boost sales activities.

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Why We Trust Philam Plans

Positive attitude, proper skills and right values are essential qualities a Philam Plans sales associate must possess to deliver exceptional customer service. Ideally the sales process, the most important activity in a marketing organization, cannot be completed without a customer-responsive product and a buyer that trusts the seller enough to buy the product. Of the three sales process conditions, the most important is the buyer or customer. A salesman can be ignorant and crass, a product sub-standard but if the buyer has confidence in the seller and believes in the product, the sale is consummated. For this reason, every marketing man worth his salt knows that the customer rules!

President and CEO Jesus Hofileña comments, "Winning is a condition that requires appropriate action. If one does not act properly, one does not achieve his or her goal. In the sales process, the most important ingredient is trust. And because we, in Philam Plans, only know this too well, we go to great lengths to instill in our agency and employee force the qualities that promote trust and confidence in our customers/buyers."

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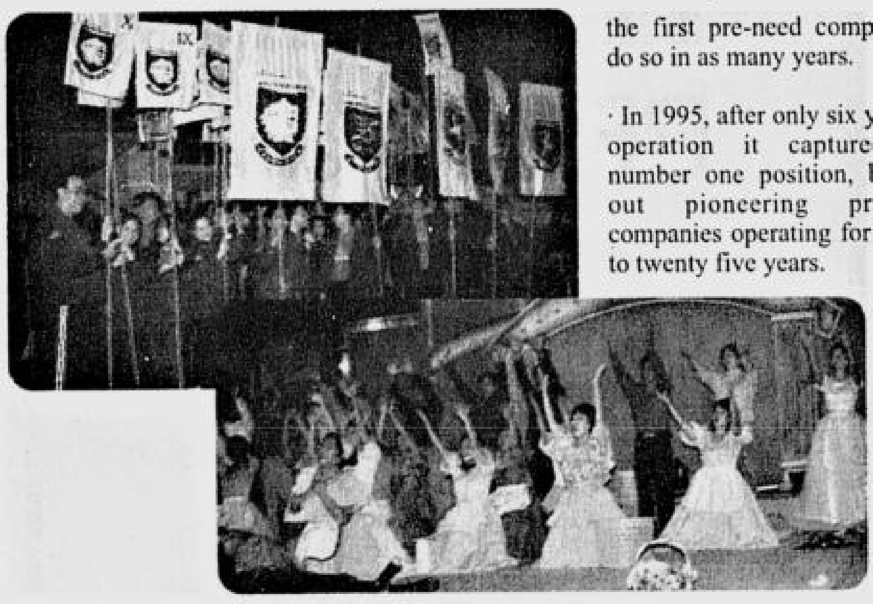

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Why Philam Plans Is Our Home

Three Philam Planners Relate their Stories

Philam Plans is proud of the quality of its people. In the pre-need industry, when they look for top-notch managers and officers, they readily cast an eye on Philam Plans. Its top management is also a staunch believer in cultivating the right values because of the nature of the products the company sells.

"Our people are our secret weapon," President and CEO Jesus Hofileña explains, " So our organization is only as good as they are. It's absolutely critical that they have the right skills, attitude and values because most of the time our word is all that stands between our customers and us. No matter how big and profitable we are, how financially stable and fiscally prudent we are those qualities mean nothing if we don't have the trust and confidence of our planholders and prospects. Integrity is a core value and key to our unfettered success."

Reman Arcibal: From Messenger to Award-Winning Agency Leader

Reman started out as a messenger in Philam Plans in 1993. The next year, he was promoted to stock clerk based in the Cubao sales office. His constant interaction with the agency force showed him how lucrative a career in sales could be if only one put in the time and effort. He decided to shift full-time into selling after a taste of his first commission gave him the impetus to learn everything he could about the business.

From sales counselor he moved up to agency leader in two years. Being ambitious and eagerly, he began to excel in his new endeavor and started receiving top national sales awards in 1999.. He has since become a mainstay in this award category, has earned a membership to the President's Honor Club and is a multi-qualifier for the Award for Marketing Excellence. Today, Reman considers his career in Philam Plans as his crowning glory and as such values all his achievements.

Ronald Bautista: From Clerk to Regional Manager

A fresh-out-college graduate in 1994, Ronald's first job in Philam Plans entailed covering company events, coordinating with ad and PR firms, and assisting the company artist - all of which he enthusiastically undertook. With this positive attitude and his innate abilities, he was promoted to training assistant and subsequently training officer from 1995 to 1997.

He cites the company's leadership, stability, excellent culture and congenial working environment as his reasons for staying. He doesn't consider himself as an achiever in the same vein as some of his older and more experienced colleagues. But then again, his rapid rise up the corporate ladder speaks volumes of this unassuming twenty-something bachelor's talents, attitude and ambition.

Myrna Rodriguez: From Sales Counselor to Sales Division Head

Agency Managers' Conference

Myrna, a pioneering career agent, joined the company as a Philamlife cross seller. By 1990, she took over her brother's agency and remained a consistent awardee until 1999. As a topnotch sales associate, she readily earned big bucks that would put CEOs compensations to shame. However, after a successful and very lucrative run as a powerhouse agency leader, top management prevailed upon her to make the leap to marketing management and become an employee. She is currently a senior assistant vice-president in charge of the company's Metro Manila sales division, the biggest sales group of the company.

Turning Skeptical Buyers to Loyal Planholders

Even as District Manager (DM) Divinagracia Uy Roa convinced a client to purchase a pre-need plan, the latter was still doubtful of the product and service offered. In fact, the planholder was so skeptical she was planning to cancel her earlier decision to purchase. When the plan policy was delivered to the client within two weeks as promised, she was finally satisfied by the prompt service and personalized attention provided her by the agent. Moreover, she was impressed by DM Roa's frequent visits to simply touch base and check how she was faring that the two became good friends. Today, Planholder Ramona Cruz owns not one but five pre-need plans ranging from pension, education and life plans.

The personal experiences related by Philam Plans sales associates and other service providers above only serve to reinforce the company value and mantra that the Customer is King. It is Philam Plans abiding mission to continue to improve its service in every area where customers interact with employees and sales associates. The constant quest for excellence does not end in the sales process. It begins there and continues years into the future.

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Raising 'Hellboy'

From page D1

And now, director Guillermo del Toro, who helmed such exquisite horror set pieces as "Mimic" and the comic-inspired "Blade II," brings our red-skinned, trench-wearing powerhouse to the big screen. Is the world ready for Hellboy? Mignola shares his thoughts in an exclusive telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

Mignola, 43, was born in Berkeley, California and worked primarily as an artist working on other people's characters before coming up with his most enduring creation. Hellboy, though immensely powerful and basically invulnerable, was also possessed of a gruff and yet wry sense of humor that struck a chord with fans. Mignola, who had been better known as an artist up to that point, says it wasn't a conscious decision. "I just wrote the only kind of character I could understand. Having never written a character and having done very little writing, but all I could do was ask, 'what would I say in this situation,' so he's modeled pretty much on me," he explains, adding that Hellboy's also modeled heavily on Mignola's cabinet maker-father, Charles, "a blue-collar guy, a tough, working stiff" who came home with scars and stories. "I just thought, 'man, this guy is the toughest guy on earth.'"

Out of that genesis emerged the tough but compassionate, immensely powerful yet thoughtful protagonist. From the very start, "Hellboy" impressed readers not only with its bravura action scenes, but also its wicked plots that often involved esoteric yet real mythology. Mignola has been reading folklore, mythology and about the supernatural since he was in sixth grade. "So Hellboy is very much the playground for everything I ever really liked. I just viewed all the world's folklore as potential characters to be in Hellboy."

Audiences loved "Hellboy's" striking originality, its unique energy and mood. Mignola knew this was his chance to make a mark: "When I sat down and did 'Hellboy,' I thought I would just get one shot at it, so I decided to do something that reflected all my interests and I tried to cram as much stuff that I liked into this one package that in years to come, when I'd have to do other things like 'Batman,' I'd have one thing to look back and say, 'well, I got to put my thing on this paper.'"

And make a mark he did. Aside from being a popular character, "Hellboy" earned Mignola Harvey and Eisner Awards, some of the comic book industry's most prestigious prizes. Mignola believes that "Hellboy's" popularity really has to do with the titular character's personality: "I think if anything maybe it's a breath of fresh air, because it isn't one of these grim, avenger-type characters. Hellboy is not sitting on top of a gargoyle, brooding. The way it is lets the reader know as serious as I take this stuff, I know it's silly, I know that readers can tell that I'm having fun with it and there are a lot of comics out there without a trace of fun in them at all."

"Hellboy" has also given audiences a generous look at Mignola's moody, edgy art, a style that not only suited the character perfectly but also made Mignola's art stand out. "There's nothing more complimentary as someone saying oh, that's Mignola-esque," he says. "I've heard that term and I've actually used that term."

HELLBOY battles Sammael

ACTOR Rupert Evans plays special agent John Myers.

Mignola thinks though that what he's doing really isn't unique, acknowledging huge influences in artists like Berni Wrightson and Frank Frazetta. "If anything, I'm bringing a particular style back that didn't use to be popular. I'm just drawing the only way I can. My style has changed through the years because at the start, I really didn't know what I'd been doing." He describes it as being 20 years of "trying to figure out how to do work that I'm happy with. It's trial and error through the years."

Though he watched a lot of movies when he was younger, devouring such flicks as 'Jason and the Argonauts" and "Planet of the Apes," Mignola never imagined Hellboy would ever be a movie.

But Del Toro had been a fan of the series almost from the very beginning and when plans were first drawn up to possibly adapt Mignola's masterpiece, Del Toro simply decided he just had to be the one to do it. "I know that if anyone was going to do it, it would be him. We both knew it would be really difficult and I tried not to take it too seriously," Mignola recalls. "So I spent five years saying don't get your hopes up. There were so many ups and downs." There were times when he thought it would never happen.

And yet Revolution Studios fueled the movie with Del Toro writing the screenplay based mostly on the first "Hellboy" story arc, a rousing mini-series called "Seed of Destruction." Officially, Mignola, aside from being credited as "Hellboy's" creator, is co-executive producer and visual consultant. Aside from visiting the movie set in Prague, he threw ideas back and forth with Del Toro, but the movie itself was something Del Toro had envisioned ever since he first read "Seed."

Heavily involved

Mignola was heavily involved in pre-production when he did designs for three months, making suggestions as Del Toro rewrote the script constantly. Mignola had worked in the movies before, doing some designs for Francis Ford Coppola's "Bram Stoker's Dracula" and for Disney's "Atlantis" and "Blade II." But he considers his experience with "Hellboy" completely different, of course. "This is the first time I've been involving in pre-production and everything beyond that: the filming, post-production and I was there through the whole process. Plus it's my character."

Meanwhile, "Hellboy" gathered an impressive cast with John Hurt signing up to play Dr. Buttenholm and Selma Blair as the sultry Liz Sherman. But Del Toro and Mignola both knew that they could envision only one person to play the lead demon: Ron Perlman, the imposing actor from the TV series "Beauty and the Beast" as well as movies like "Alien: Resurrection" and "Blade II."

Mignola explains his choice: "Ron was just perfect. He had the physical presence of the character and the personality of the character. He just talked like Hellboy and had the same demeanor. He's also not a star in the traditional Hollywood sense so you could put him under make up. You could put a tail on him! You couldn't do that to Bruce Willis."

There was even the fortuitous element to the fact that Hellboy had to wear a heavy stone gauntlet on his right hand that would inconvenience actors who were mostly right-handed because Hellboy would still have to wield weapons with his free, left hand. Yet "Ron not only turned out to be left-handed, allowing us to put the gauntlet on his right hand, but he had been taught by his father to play sports with his right hand so he could throw a convincing punch with his right hand. It was like he had been bred to play this character!" And also spare movie and comic fans the Left Hand of Doom.

Sequel

This early, there is already some talk about a possible sequel. Mignola admits he and Del Toro have sat down and talked about it, adding that the sequel will most probably be based on other Hellboy mini-series such as "Conqueror Worm," among others. "I hope it happens. It's going to be a lot of fun," he says.

One of the Hellboy pantheon's strengths is its eclectic and notably large cast of characters, such as Roger the Homunculus. "If you have a list of the characters Guillermo wants in the movies, all you would have are scenes of the characters walking by. I think the most important thing is to come up with the story and see which characters are necessary for that story."

So what does the future hold for the red-skinned hero? Mignola doesn't have an ending for Hellboy in mind, not the way, say, that Neil Gaiman had a definite ending in mind for his Sandman series. "What I have is a list of things I need to do with the character and I probably have three major stories that need to be told. And they will do so much with the character that by the end of those stories, I will have said so much about the character and the character would have changed so much that I wouldn't know what to do with him after that."

But whether you are a hardcore comic book fan or simply someone who wants to see something original on screen, then Mignola believes that the movie based on his beloved Hellboy is something you should see. "If the American audience is any judge, then they're seeing it as a breath of fresh air just like the comic book fans did the comic book."

Columbia Pictures' "Hellboy" opens in Metro Manila theaters on April 21.

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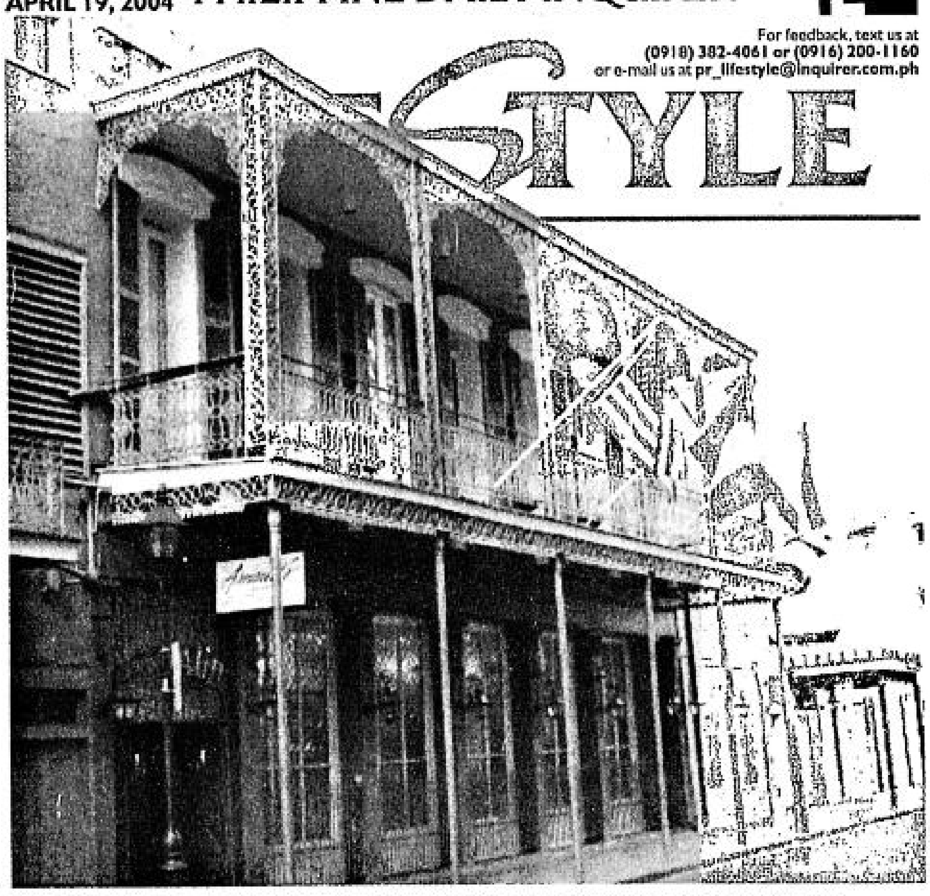


LACEWORK balconies frame building façades in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

Surprising New Orleans

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

AT THE DOWNTOWN shuttle counter in Louis Armstrong Airport in New Orleans, the woman took her time drawling a long "Thanks, honey chile" as she handed over my ticket for the bus that would take me to the city.

Hearing her convinced me that I could not be anywhere but in the American South. It was my first time in that part of the United States, but I quickly discovered that, unlike the rest of generic America, New Orleans had a style of its own that instantly put me at ease. At that point I still had to learn that the New Orleans style was primarily Creole with a Southern overlay.

History has everything to do with the New Orleans style. Louisiana was claimed in the name of King Louis XIV of France in 1699, making it the only state to have once been a French royal colony.

In 1718, the French founded New Orleans on a swampy bend of Mississippi River, eventually handing the city over to the Spanish, who stayed until the 1803 signing of the Louisiana Purchase which transferred the colony to the United States.

Today, New Orleans flaunts her historical overlays with finesse and much charm, an Old World city in the New World, the only Creole city in the American South.

The Creole lifestyle blends Old World refinement (French or Spanish) with New World freshness (American Indian or African-American), coming together with a gentility and flair that distinguishes Louisiana culture from the rest of America.

The lifestyle is catching. In this multi-textured city, locals take much pleasure in their unique cultural identity and have an engaging pride of place for their city and the surrounding landscape. There is no choice but to fall under their spell.

The historical mix of influences shows clearly in the architecture. New Orleans has more than 35,000 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, more than any other American city. Washington, DC, follows with 20,000 listings.

Most of the architectural treasures of the city are located in the 120 blocks of the Vieux Carré or the French Quarter.

> The former French-Spanish colonial outpost is distinct from the rest of predictable America and holds heritage lessons for the Philippines

French Quarter

The French Quarter is the image the world holds of New Orleans. The quarter is home to the Ursuline Convent which dates to 1745. It is said to be the oldest building in the Mississippi River Valley, once the first nunnery in the colony and then a school before it temporarily housed the Louisiana State Legislature.

Saint Louis Cathedral, built in 1724 in the Gothic style and rebuilt twice after destruction by hurricane and fire, overlooks the historic Jackson Square in the French Quarter.

Next to the cathedral is the arcaded Spanish-colonial Cabildo, was the former Spanish government center which has now been converted into a city museum.

Walk around the quarter see a classic French courtyard at Place d'Armes Hotel. There is a better courtyard (where they serve food and drink) at Napoleon, reputed to be among the best bars in the United States.

Thierry House was an early work by the renowned American architect Henry Latrobe. It is said to have been an early use of Greek Revival architecture, which subsequently developed into a heavy influence on Louisiana architecture.

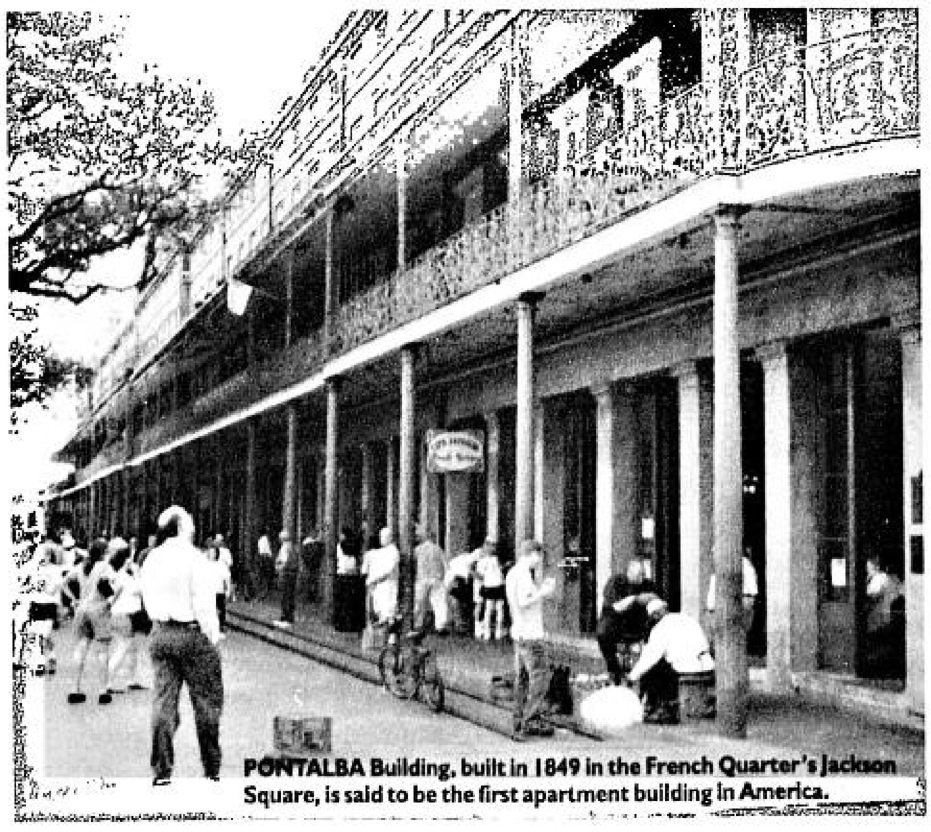
Rows of heritage buildings flank both sides of French Quarter streets, where iron grillwork transforms into delicate lace veiling façades of the structures, casting intricate shadows on the narrow streets. Grillwork frames second-level verandahs which cover sidewalks with a canopy of shade.

The trademark New Orleans verandahs often serve as outdoor extensions to homes where people have lunch or dinner on an open balcony while participating in the vibrant street life below. Street life is all important in the French Quarter.

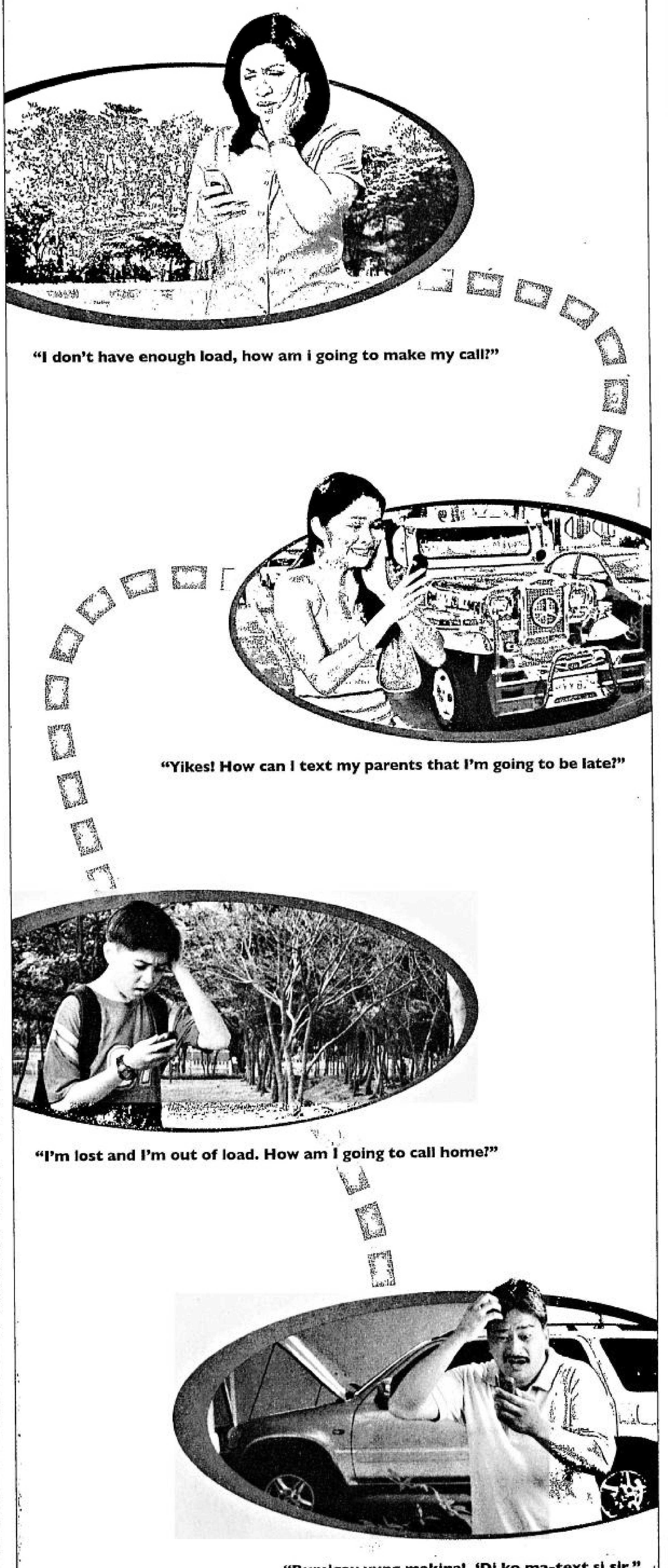
Life spills out into the streets of the French Quarter at all times of the day. It is a thriving neighborhood with residents and businesses that have been located in the area for generations. There are private homes, condominiums, apartments, and full services for the residents, banks, small grocery stores and restaurants.

During the day, local residents and businessmen are out doing their daily business. Tourists take over in the early afternoon. The pace builds up until the evening when lines

SURPRISING/ E2



PONTALBA Building, built in 1849 in the French Quarter's Jackson Square, is said to be the first apartment building in America.



Do you worry about the prepaid subscribers in your household running out of load?

"I don't have enough load, how am i going to make my call?"

"Yikes! How can I text my parents that I'm going to be late?"

"I'm lost and I'm out of load. How am I going to call home?"

"Bumigay yung makina!, 'Di ko ma-text si sir."

MOLLY and Karen deciding what baskets to buy

LULU and Gerry Garcia's house

MANGYAN children celebrating their fiesta Kaaldawan Day. Their traditional *dalit* baskets play an important part in planting and harvesting.

Hard problems for our handicrafts

ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

ONE evening, I was feeling cold and wanted an extra blanket. I headed for the linen closet. Opening the closet door in the darkness, I stretched my hand out, expecting a bundle of softness. Instead, I was quite surprised to bump into all these dark hard shapes!

I hadn't gone to the wrong place. But the linen closet now also sheltered a selection of my mother's latest advocacy: Mangyan baskets!

My mother had been trying to help the Mangyan who lived near her beach house in Mindoro. She hit on the idea of buying their baskets. She found she could later sell the baskets to her friends—charging exactly what she paid the makers.

She began to buy more. And more. And soon the baskets were taking over our linen closets!

At one point, an American woman who was working on a design project with the Mangyan baskets actually demanded to see my mother. She explained that by buying every single piece regardless of quality, my mother was doing the Mangyan a disservice. How could they learn to maintain certain standards if someone kept on indiscriminately buying anything that was turned out?

My mother was not amused. She pointed out to the lady that if certain baskets were unsold, their owners would have no food. This ended the discussion. But my mother went on acting as the Mangyans' main sales outlet!

In another house and in another time, I was visiting a handicrafts supplier, Lulu Garcia. I happened to look into her husband's office and couldn't stop laughing.

The office had been invaded! You could hardly see the computer for all the baskets! Baskets were everywhere. The husband, Gerry, told me that it had all started as a hobby for his wife. Finding that she could actually sell the pieces, she bought more and started to keep some in her car ready for buyers. Of course, the stash in the car soon spread to the house.

Gerry soon issued an ultimatum. Thankfully, Lulu chose hubby over hobby!

Business

Actually the story didn't just end there. Instead of making handicrafts her hobby, Lulu made it her business. She started attending bazaars and trade fairs. She soon experienced many successes but also so many problems.

Gerry told of the time that he had to pitch in when his wife was away. He had a commitment to send a large order of handicraft pieces abroad. But the supplier did not meet the deadline. It was a nightmare.

Similarly my mother had worked out certain specifications for the special panels she had ordered from the Mangyan. She had the idea of using these panels as decorative elements for her beach house.

Unfortunately, the Mangyan always said yes but never followed the agreed-upon designs. My mother finally gave up and accepted whatever designs were produced.

These stories and many more like them tell us of the hardships one encounters in handicrafts. While there is a consensus that there is an abundance of artistry and creativity, whoever tries to create markets for handicrafts will run into problems.

I, too, have had the chance to work with handicrafts. I was recently given the chance to help my friend, Joel Uichico, redecorate a resort in Batangas.

I thought it would be a great way of demonstrating how to help revitalize our handicraft traditions and provide livelihood for many communities. Egged on by some of my friends, I resolved that the décor of the resort would be completely Filipino.

Easier said than done, I was to learn.

I must admit I had some warning. There was my mother's experience. And there were many stories of how one had to practically beg to get one's order of handicrafts delivered.

Often, one had to visit repeatedly, becoming embroiled in the family affairs of crafts producers. One becomes *abay sa kasal*, *ninang sa binyag*. One ends up giving *lechon sa fiesta* and *abuloy sa patay*. And still one is lucky if one's orders actually come out.

It took so many trips all the way to Majayjay in Laguna just to get my *banigs*. Once, the *banig*-maker disappeared for four hours!

The worst part is the cancellations. The day before her delivery date, one of my suppliers called to say she would need a few more months. Why she could not tell me earlier, I do not know.

Of course, the friend who had convinced me to go all-Filipino-craft took the brunt of my frustrations. I am talking about many, many midnight calls which were just one complaint after another!

I realized part of the problem when I was reviewing the pictures of the women who were weaving the *banigs* I was using for my headboards. They were all so old. Clearly the youths were not interested in carrying on the trade.

Give up?

So, do we just give up? Do we just let our traditional crafts die?

Of course not!

For our handicrafts are the soul of our country. They are important images of our identity. And they can help provide employment for so many people.

Wherever you go in Southeast Asia, you see how alive their handicraft industries are. One sees, for example, that traditional products are so integrated into the décor of many resorts and hotels in Bali. Why can't we do the same?

Our handicrafts can tell us so much about ourselves. When we were interviewing the Mangyan, it was so wonderful to listen to them expound on their different traditional baskets. They all had specific names and specific uses. They were made from processes and materials that had been handed down through generations.

Interestingly, we also learned from the interview how a Peace Corps volunteer had influenced them to experiment with new designs. So the baskets which we thought were traditional really weren't!

But this last detail just adds another dimension to our appreciation of our crafts: Our crafts reflect what is happening in our lives.

Some of our crafts show our connections with other cultures. Some reflect local inventions and innovations. Imagine how much of ourselves we stand to lose if our handicrafts disappear.

There are, of course, many challenges, many frustrations. Our supplies are running out. Rattan, *capiz*, *nito*, *uway*, even *pandan* are now disappearing as our forests and seas are destroyed.

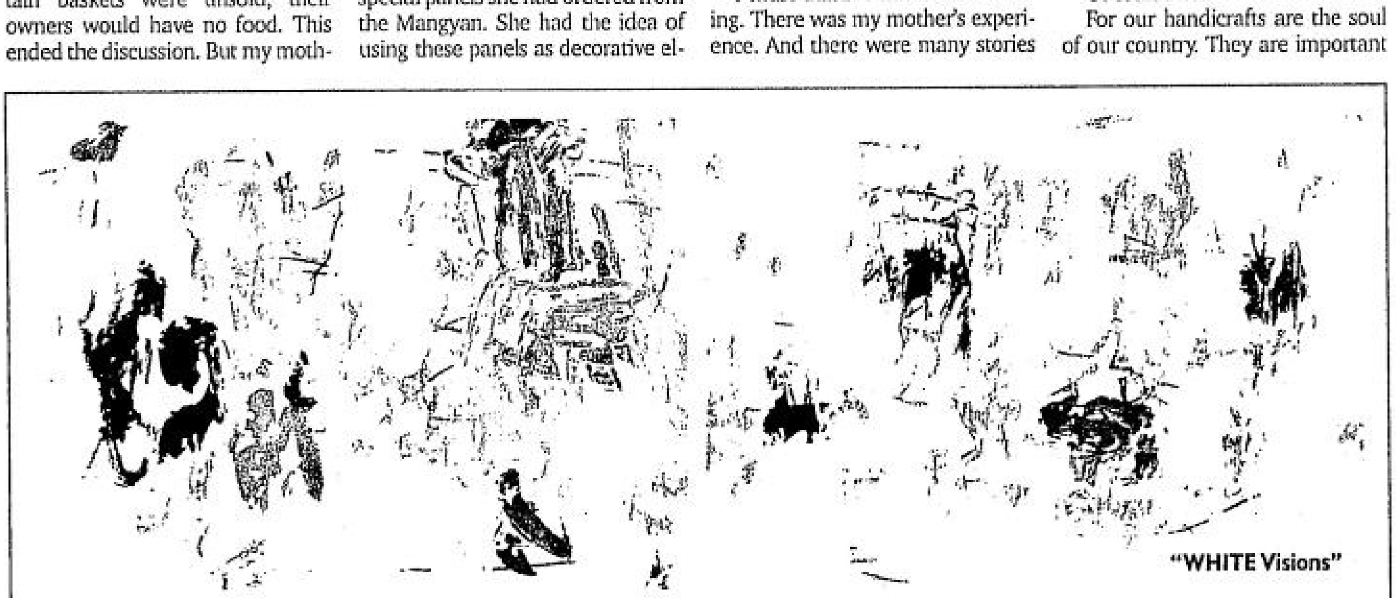
Traditional patterns and methods are being forgotten. Producers face formidable obstacles: There is a dearth of roads, access to credit, even such basics as tools and electricity.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is marketing. How to convince people to support crafts, to buy crafts? How to urge the public to use more crafts in homes and offices. How to bring across the message that the crafts are not old-fashioned or just for the elderly.

As communications expert David Nugent points out: We have to make handicrafts hip! I suppose we can all begin by just finding new ways to reintroduce handicrafts into our lives.

Can we see a future for our traditional crafts in our country? Or, to put it in another way, can we see a Philippines without our *banig*, our *bakya*, our weaving, our baskets, our embroidery?

I can't. Can you?



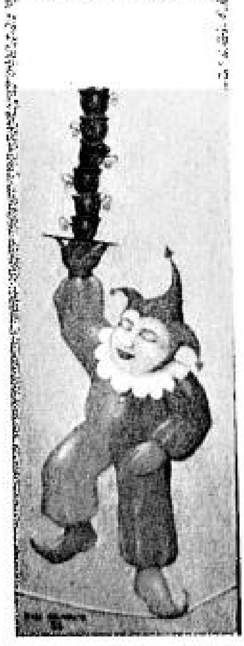
"WHITE Visions"

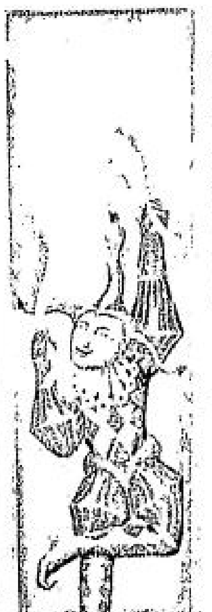
CID REYES' 'WHITE NIGHTS' AT WEST

Cid Reyes presents his ninth solo show, "White Nights: Visions of an Insomniac," on April 22-May 4 at West Gallery, 4/L, SM Megamall A. Reyes' latest abstractions are dominated by white pigment applied in spontaneous brushstrokes and animated by calligraphic marks. Reyes is perhaps the most active art critic in the country, writing "Gallery-Hopping" for the Today newspaper.

SOLIVEN'S PHOTOS AT ROCKWELL

Rolly Rodriguez Soliven's photos will be featured in "Be Still..." The exhibit will open on April 28 at the Rockwell Power Plant lobby. This fundraiser will benefit cancer-stricken children at the Kythe Foundation. Soliven is holding one of his works, "Roman Design."





"BALANCING Act" (above) and "Noodle Dance" (right)

BIN SAMONTE AT GALLERY NINE

Bin Samonte of Artery, a group of young painters based in Malate, Manila, has an ongoing joint exhibit with Palma Tayona in Gallery Nine at SM Megamall, until April 25. The exhibit "Art, Actually" the exhibit features the incongruity between art and reality, body and soul, the mundane and the spiritual, as evinced by the fool archetype in Samonte's paintings. Call 6877302.

Surprising . . .

From page E1

form outside the many restaurants for dinner, and after that, the lines form once again outside jazz bars.

People party in the streets late into the night. New Orleans is no Southern dowager.

Food and jazz

Creole and Cajun food are dead giveaways for that Louisiana cultural identity. The cuisine blends French, Spanish, African and New World influences.

Black Africans called *okra* "gumbo," giving the name to a thick soup with a variety of meat additives (ham, chicken, turkey, duck, sausage, shrimp, oysters, crabs) that is usually served over rice. Gumbo is only the beginning of a Creole meal.

Jazz is a large part of the New Orleans identity. Often heralded as probably the only art form native to the United States, historians claim that jazz originally flowed from a variety of musical influences, fusing African work chants, American folk music, Spanish dances, and French quadrilles.

Contemporary jazz developed in the late 1800s, and after that, Louis Armstrong, a revered New Orleans icon, popularized Dixieland.

The Saint Charles Avenue streetcar is the oldest continuously operating street railway in the world. It winds along oak-lined avenues past antebellum and Victorian mansions of the Garden District.

At the Garden District, old trees peacefully shade streets lined with stately homes, most of them historic and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

When New Orleans became part of the United States, there was an influx of "Americans," Anglo-Saxon stock bent on acquiring their share of Louisiana wealth from cotton, sugar and shipping.

Riches the immigrants acquired, but the French Creoles refused to accept them as social equals. In retaliation, they developed a lavish neighborhood a short distance upriver.

Elegant gardens, visible from the street, contrast with the tightly cloistered French Quarter interior patios. They gave the area its name. In the Garden District are stately homes in Greek Revival and West Indian architectural styles.

Iron galleries mark the Carroll-Crawford House, where Edgar Degas and Mark Twain once attended lavish parties. An elegant front portico that turns into a side gallery is the hallmark of the Brevard-Wisdom House.

Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, died in the Payne-Strachan House, which is an outstanding example of period architecture.

The centerpiece of the Garden District is the Robinson-Jordan House, the largest in the area, which boasts of being the first house in the city with indoor plumbing. Its fine carriage house still survives.

Many Garden District mansions are now charming bed-and-breakfasts.

In surviving the onslaught of modernization and tourism over the years, New Orleans is an outstanding example of a city that has maintained its individuality because of the strong pride of place of its residents. It is a place that I will, without any hesitation, go back to again.

E-mail your comments and feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com

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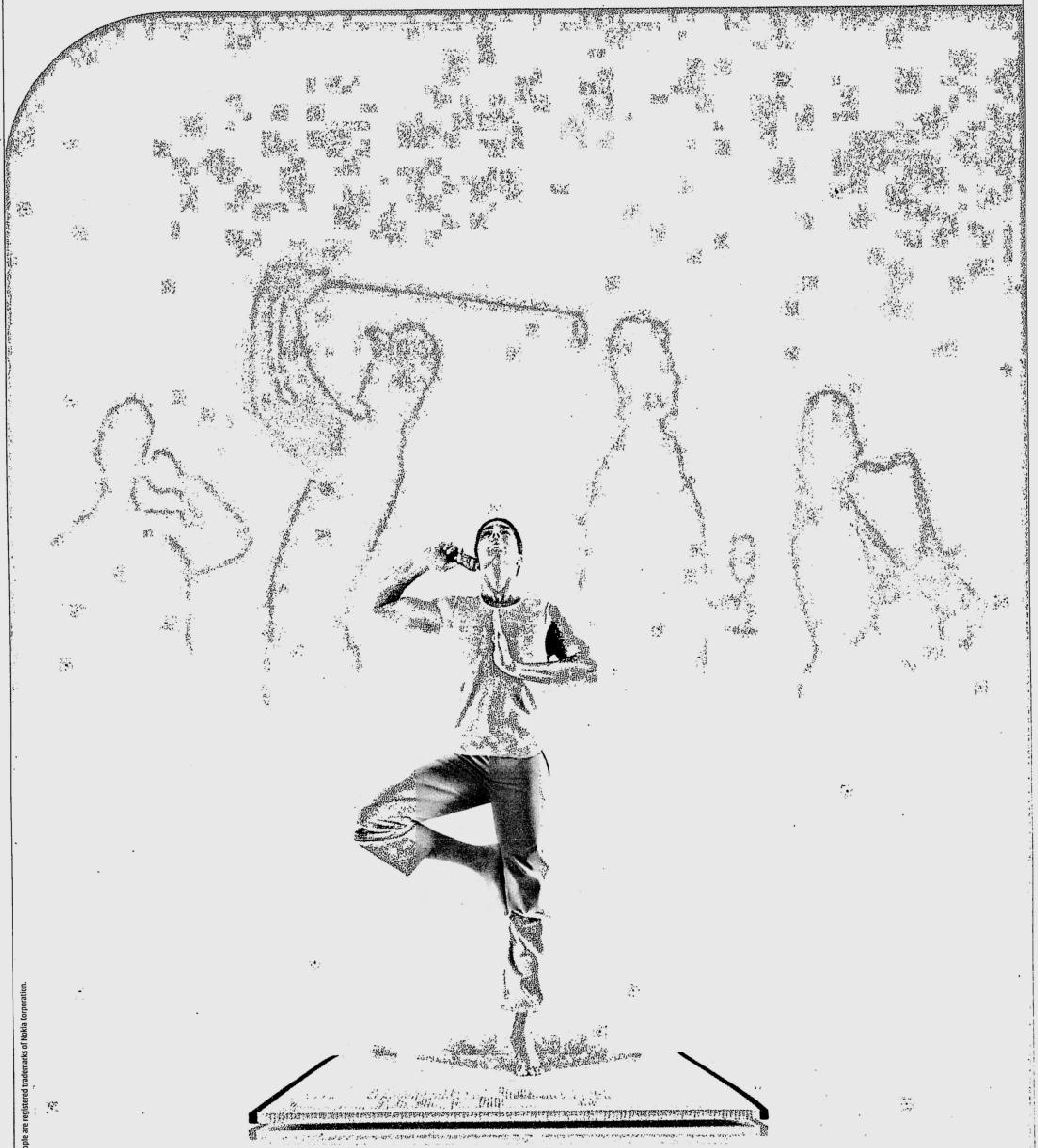

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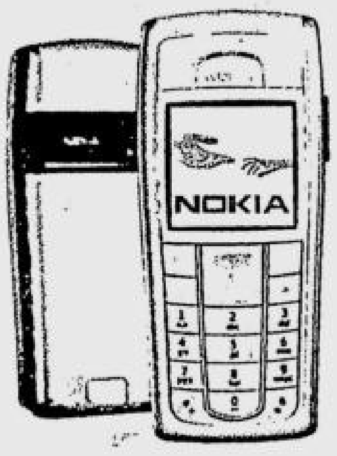

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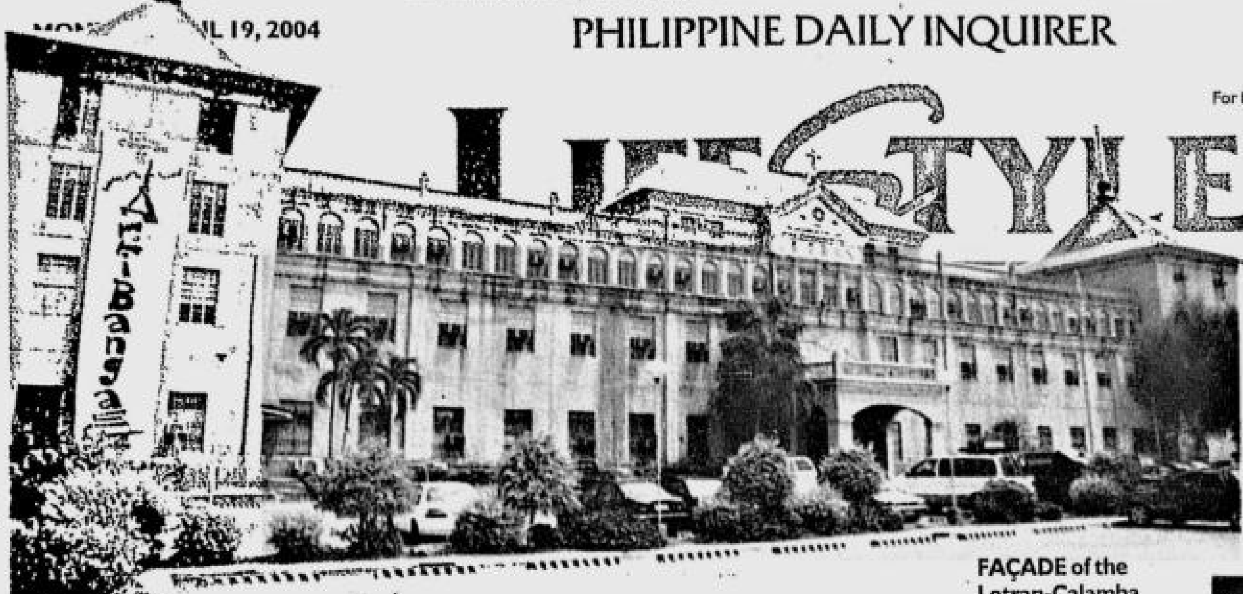
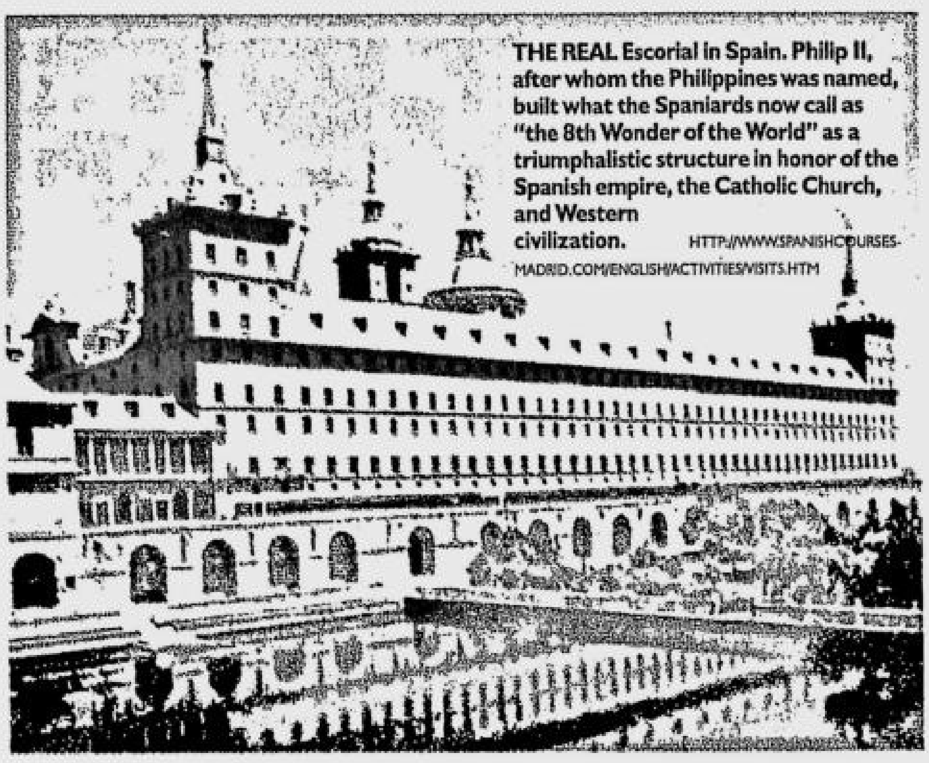


FAÇADE of the Letran-Calamba patterned after Spain's El Escorial. The massiveness is alleviated by the sunny streamer inscribed with the well-known Letranite cheer, "Arriba!"

At the foot of Mt. Makiling, Letran-Calamba is a magnificent architectural showcase of heritage, education and faith



THE REAL Escorial in Spain. Philip II, after whom the Philippines was named, built what the Spaniards now call as "the 8th Wonder of the World" as a triumphalistic structure in honor of the Spanish empire, the Catholic Church, and Western civilization. HTTP://WWW.SPANISHCOURSES-MADRID.COM/ENGLISH/ACTIVITIES/VISITS.HTM

The Escorial of the south

By Lito Zulueta
Photos by Roger Carpio

IN THE PHILIPPINE landscape, school buildings are as ubiquitous as churches. They represent the people's educational drive toward enlightenment and development, much as churches represent the evangelical enterprise that Christianized these islands in record time.

But sadly, many schools are as nondescript and boring as schoolmarms. They hardly represent the creative and imaginative fire that education is supposed to kindle. This is the case for both private and public schools, sectarian and non-sectarian schools.

Especially for Catholic schools—sectarian and private—the failure to come up with school buildings that reflect their mission is inexcusable. In the first place, Catholic education has had centuries of heritage with which to draw design inspiration from. Secondly, Catholic educators should know their mission is intimately linked with evangelization. And evangelization operates mainly on the level of symbolism and ritual. Thus, Catholic structures and designs are inherently sacramental.

A fine example of the artistic confluence between education and evangelization is the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Bucal, Calamba, Laguna. The school sits at the foot of the picturesque Mt. Makiling. The complex of buildings on campus is remarkably massive and towering, as exemplified by the dramatic and imposing façade of the main building patterned after Spain's magnificent El Escorial.

But the buildings don't compete with the sleeping lady (as the mountain is commonly characterized by the local folk) in the background: their impact really is not one of collision or one-upmanship, but rather of familiarity and even confidence.

Dominican heritage

The familiarity and confidence owe perhaps to the long history of involvement in Calamba of the Dominicans, the influential religious order that owns and runs Letran. The Spanish Dominicans owned haciendas in Laguna during the colonial era. Nationalist historians have pointed to the haciendas as part of the depredations of the colonial era, but Nick Joaquin has cited them as evidence of how the Spaniards took seriously the business of developing the islands. He has explained that the native Filipinos had considered the lands around Mt. Makiling enchanted, thus avoiding and leaving them undeveloped. It was the missionaries who tamed the lands and introduced cash crops in the islands that started agriculture and industry in the Philippines.

The Dominican legacy in Calamba is particularly evi-

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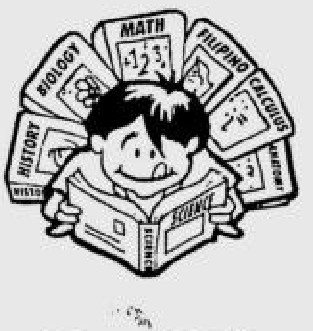

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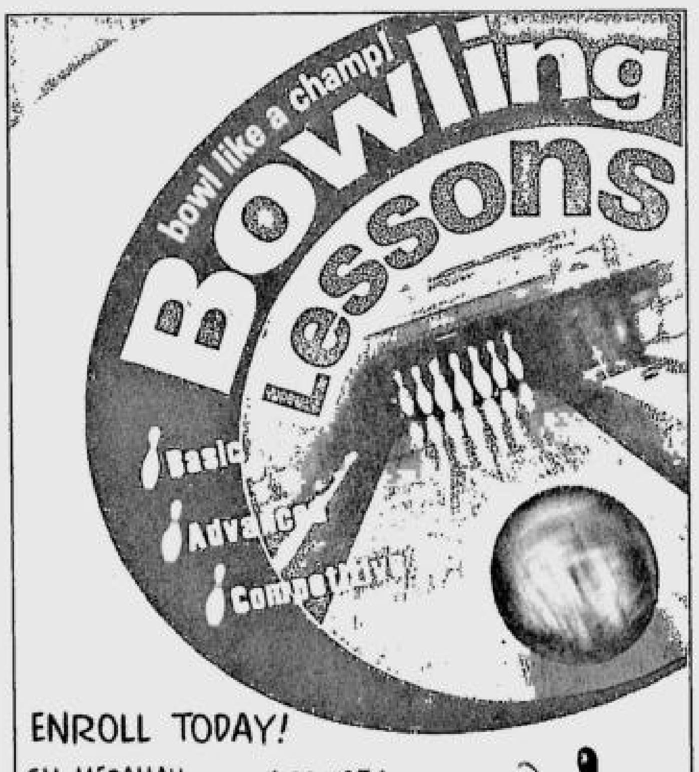

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Carol Ford is a U.S. registered nurse who specializes in conducting review classes for nurses taking the CGFNS/NCLEX exams. She has also pioneered the development of oral English materials in pronunciation and accent modification. She has provided English training for FORTUNE 500 executives, physicians, nurses, college students and university faculties in different parts of the world.

Mrs. Jiggy Rajah has been an English Grammar teacher and TOEFL instructor in Malaysia for over 40 years. She has headed several programs that trained thousands of students to speak English as well as effective oral and written communication. This course is designed for students of all ages and specializations.

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Instructor: Mrs. Jiggy Rajah
April 23 (Friday.), 24 (Saturday), 26, 27, 28, 29 (Monday-Thursday) at 8:30am to 4:30pm
Course fee: P6,000

Schedule for IELTS Review (4 days, 24 hours)
April 19 to 22 (Monday - Thursday) at 10:00am to 4:00pm
Course fee: P5,000

Schedule for Intensive NCLEX Review (4 days, 30 hours)
Instructor: Ms. Carol Ford
April 26 to 29 (Monday - Thursday) at 8:00am to 5:00pm
Course fee: P6,000

ACCENT MODIFICATION PROGRAM (4 days, 24 hours)
April 21 to 24 (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday)
Course fee: P4,000

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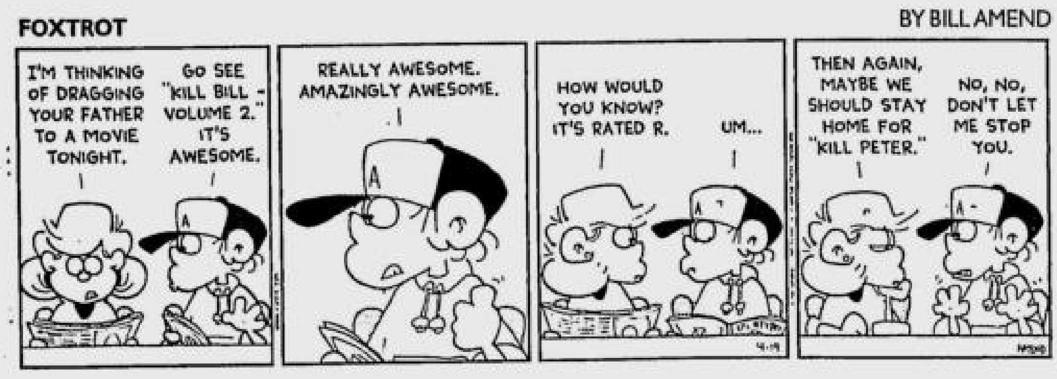
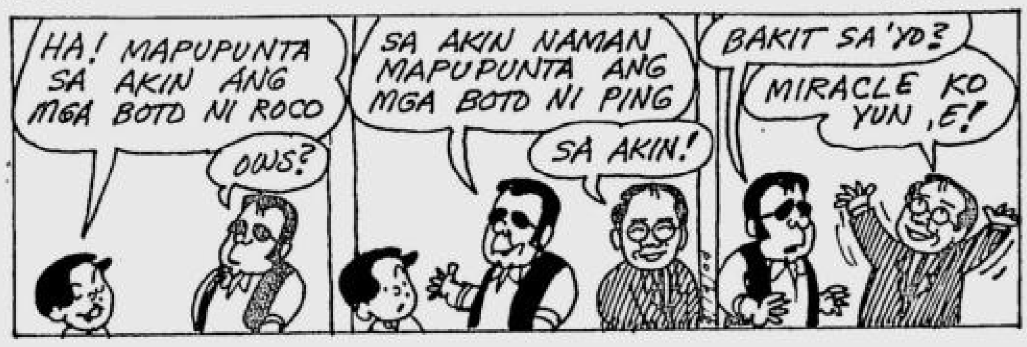
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I'M THINKING OF DRAGGING YOUR FATHER TO A MOVIE TONIGHT.
GO SEE "KILL BILL - VOLUME 2." IT'S AWESOME.
REALLY AWESOME. AMAZINGLY AWESOME.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? IT'S RATED R.
UM...
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE WE SHOULD STAY HOME FOR "KILL PETER."
NO, NO, DON'T LET ME STOP YOU.
4-19

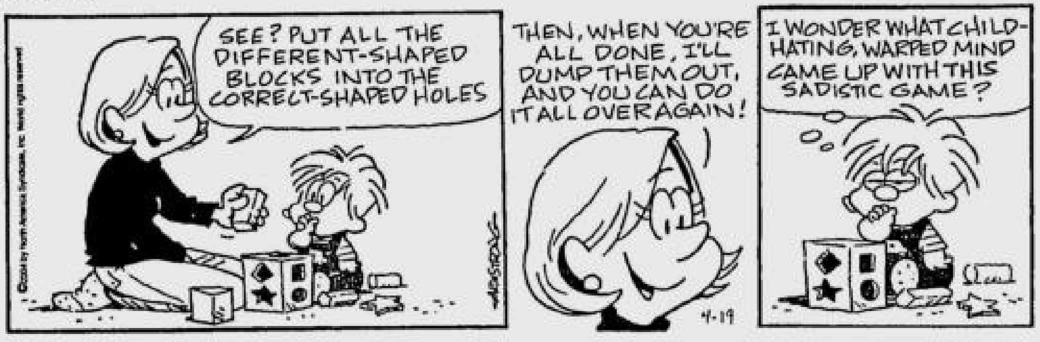
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HA! MAPUPUNTA SA AKIN ANG MGA BOTO NI ROCO
OWS?
SA AKIN NAMAN MAPUPUNTA ANG MGA BOTO NI PING
SA AKIN!
BAKIT SA 'YO?
MIRACLE KO YUN, E!

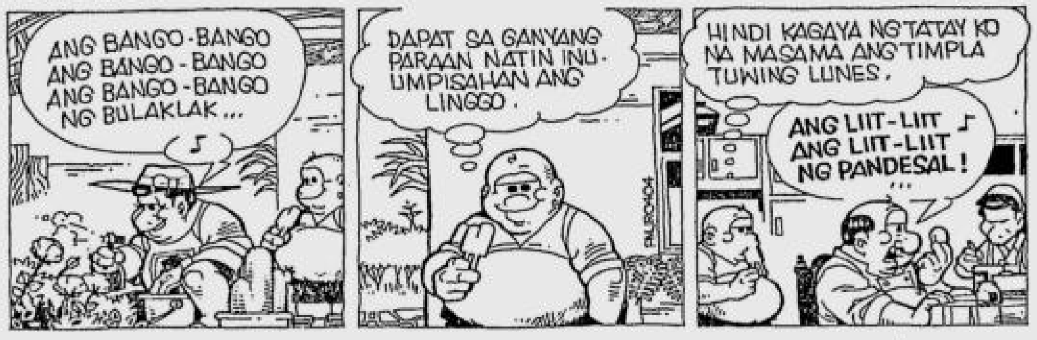
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SEE? PUT ALL THE DIFFERENT-SHAPED BLOCKS INTO THE CORRECT-SHAPED HOLES
THEN, WHEN YOU'RE ALL DONE, I'LL DUMP THEM OUT, AND YOU CAN DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN!
I WONDER WHAT CHILD-HATING, WARPED MIND CAME UP WITH THIS SADISTIC GAME?
4-19

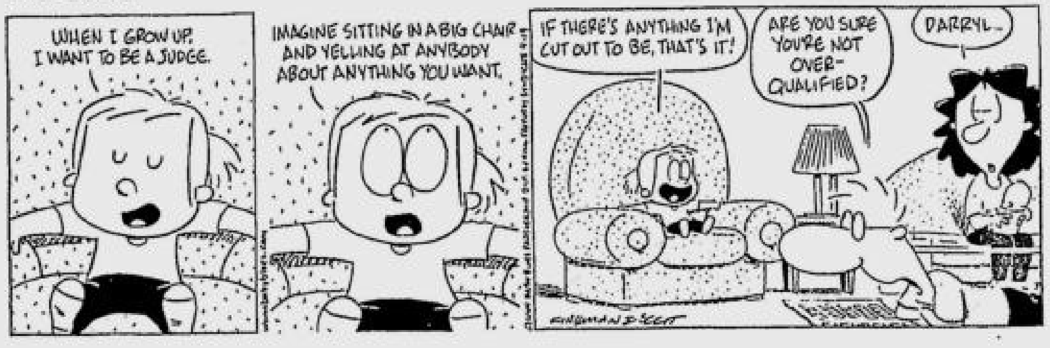
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG BANGO-BANGO ANG BANGO-BANGO ANG BANGO-BANGO NG BULAKLAK...
DAPAT SA GANYANG PARAAN NATIN INUUMPISAHAN ANG LINGGO.
HINDI KAGAYA NG TATAY KO NA MASAMA ANG TIMPLA TUWING LUNES.
ANG LIIT-LIIT ANG LIIT-LIIT NG PANDESAL!

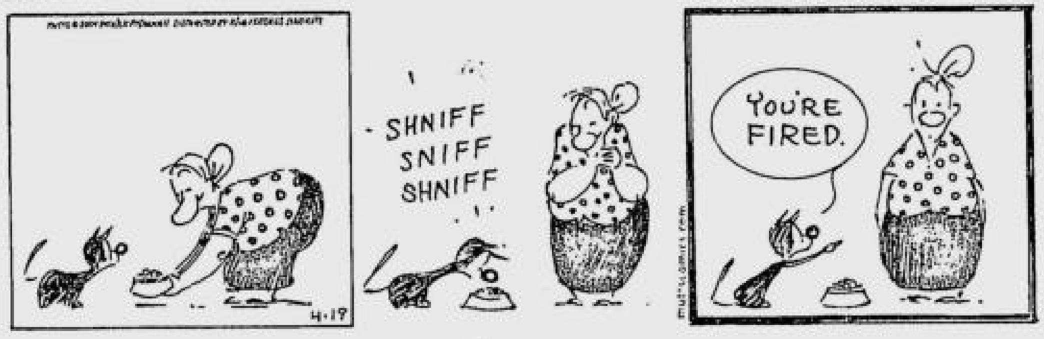
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHEN I GROW UP, I WANT TO BE A JUDGE.
IMAGINE SITTING IN A BIG CHAIR AND YELLING AT ANYBODY ABOUT ANYTHING YOU WANT.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I'M CUT OUT TO BE, THAT'S IT!
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT OVER-QUALIFIED?
DARRYL...
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

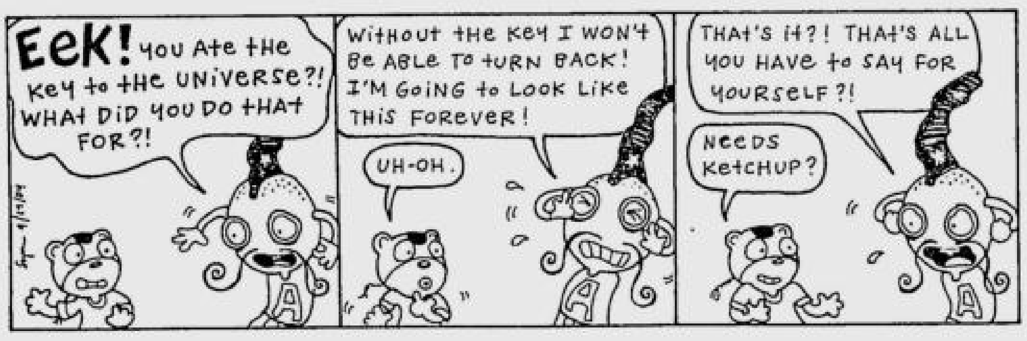
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHNIFF SNIFF SHNIFF
YOU'RE FIRED.
4-19

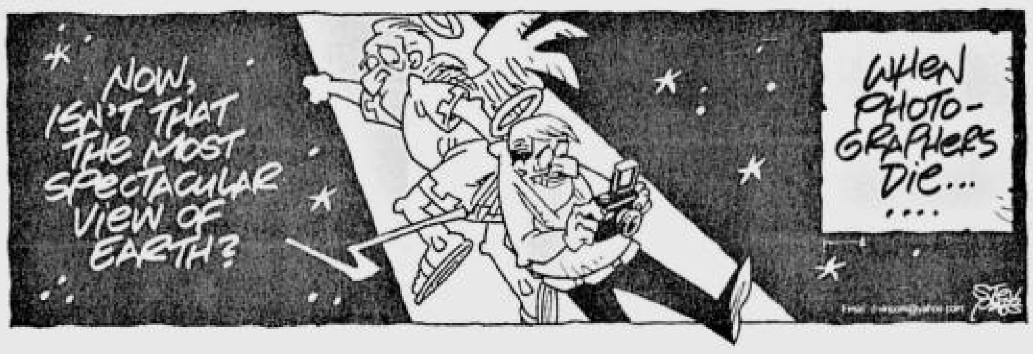
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


EeK! you Ate the key to the universe?! What did you do that for?!
Without the key I won't be able to turn back! I'm going to look like this forever!
UH-OH.
That's it?! That's all you have to say for yourself?!
Needs ketchup?

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


NOW, ISN'T THAT THE MOST SPECTACULAR VIEW OF EARTH?
WHEN PHOTOGRAPHERS DIE....

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You like to feel in control of your world. Because of this, you set goals. You are steady and reliable; you're also talented in many fields. You have a good chance of success at whatever you attempt; however, your success comes most easily later in life. The year ahead focuses on your closest relationships and partnerships.
Birthdate of: Ashley Judd, actress; Kate Hudson, actress; Hayden Christensen, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today's Solar Eclipse is the perfect time to think about how to improve your appearance and your image in the world. Think about how you can put your best foot forward.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): No matter what religion you are or you aren't, your spiritual approach to life still exists. One thing is certain: You don't want to suffer; you want to be happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You need lots of stimulation. You hate to be bored. If you want friends in your life, the solution is simple: be friendly.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today's Solar Eclipse is the perfect time to think about your general life path. What can you do to move in the direction that you want to go?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're very clever at being able to find new uses for existing things. Your sense of resourcefulness is superb. In fact, you even amaze yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's important to use your resources wisely. What's the point of having a priceless jewel if it's buried in the back yard? Use what you've got.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have an excellent opportunity now to see how you relate to others. Do you pick up on tiny cues? Do you see the pain in those around you? Learn how to fine-tune your antenna.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Take time today to think how you can improve your work habits. Confucius said, "If you love what you do, you'll never have to work a day in your life."

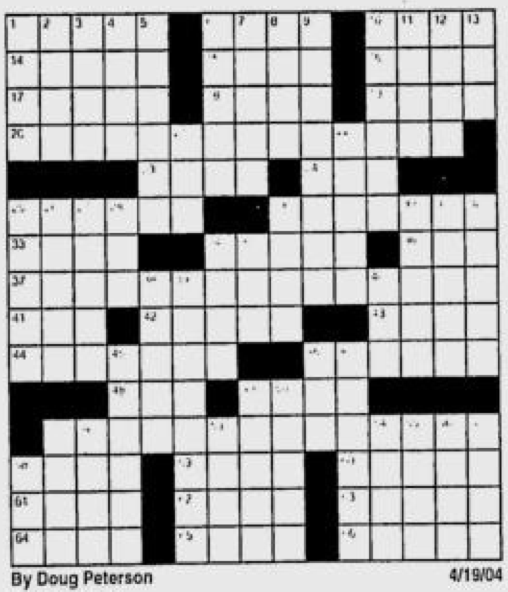
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You work hard, and you play hard. Make sure you give yourself opportunities to enjoy the arts, sports and social occasions with others.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Security is important for you. Think what you can do to feel more cozy and happy in your home. How can you best promote warm feelings among family members?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Expect to write, study and communicate with others more than usual in the next six weeks. You have something you want to say or express. This is the time to do it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have to know what you want before you can go after something. Do you know what you want? What must you do to promote your happiness?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Doug Peterson
Pasadena, CA

4/19/04

ACROSS
1 Doorway sides
6 Dove's opposite
10 Biblical kingdom
14 Workers' group
15 Opposed to, in Dogpatch
16 Warrior Princess of TV
17 Have a feeling
18 Flintstones' pet
19 Ranger Rodriguez
20 Hawthorne collection
23 Distinct region
24 FDR's last V.P.
25 Desert gully
29 Wet
33 MGM founder Marcus
34 Florida city
36 Jack Horner's last words
37 Two passports
41 Immigrants' subj.
42 Liqueur flavoring
43 Trail mix
44 Commentary
46 Overly precious
48 Male swan
49 Mary Kay rival
51 Redundant denial
58 Actor Neeson
59 Ye __ Shoppe
60 Kind of breath?
61 Court legend Arthur
62 Stadium level
63 Filthy money?
64 Turn away from
65 Lip
66 Fictional Frome

DOWN
1 Fair and square
2 Once more
3 Short skirt
4 Pear type
5 Dopey cohort
6 Wore
7 Light on one's feet
8 Empty talk
9 Board flaw
10 Puts on a pedestal
11 Editor's mark
12 Individuals
13 Ernst or Planck
21 Besides
22 Man from Manchuria
25 Birch relative
26 Provoke
27 Sphere of influence
28 Nocturnal raptor
29 Minotaur's milieu
30 Lake near Reno
31 Kuwaiti rulers
32 A bit chilly
34 Singer Redding
35 U.S.S.R. successor
38 Chocolate substitute
39 Rorschach images
40 Army NCO
45 Depth of perception
46 Gear tooth
47 Lacking the skill
49 Aconcagua's range
50 Swerves
51 Menu item
52 Pearl Harbor's island
53 Director Kazan
54 Tightly drawn
55 Seven-year malady?
56 Norm's unseen wife on "Cheers"
57 First garden
58 Vegas lead-in

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	I	B	A	B	A	■	B	I	B	E	L	O	T
D	E	N	O	T	E	S	■	E	N	R	O	U	T	E
E	N	C	O	R	E	S	■	S	T	A	N	T	O	N
■	■	■	N	A	P	E	R	I	E	S	■	H	O	E
S	K	I	D	■	S	T	E	E	R	■	F	E	L	T
A	N	D	O	H	■	S	A	G	A	M	O	R	E	S
G	E	E	G	A	W	■	D	E	C	O	R	■	■	■
S	E	A	G	R	A	M	■	S	T	A	G	E	R	S
■	■	■	L	E	R	O	I	■	S	T	E	R	E	O
I	N	T	E	R	R	I	N	G	■	S	T	I	F	F
N	E	E	P	■	A	S	C	O	T	■	M	E	S	A
D	A	P	■	E	N	T	H	R	O	N	E	■	■	■
I	T	E	R	A	T	E	■	I	R	A	N	I	A	N
G	L	E	A	S	O	N	■	E	M	P	O	R	I	A
O	Y	S	T	E	R	S	■	R	E	S	T	A	R	T

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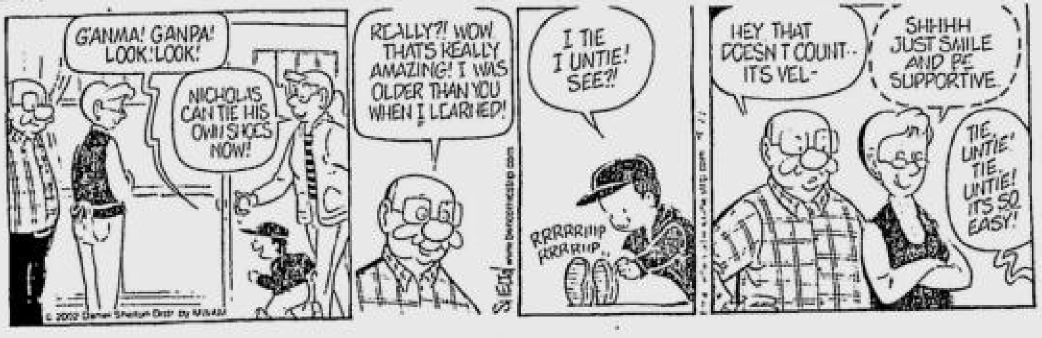
4/19/04

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


G'ANMA! G'ANPA! LOOK! LOOK!
NICHOLAS CAN TIE HIS OWN SHOES NOW!
REALLY?! WOW THAT'S REALLY AMAZING! I WAS OLDER THAN YOU WHEN I LEARNED!
I TIE I UNTIE! SEE?!
RRRRRIIP RRRRIIP...
HEY THAT DOESN'T COUNT.. ITS VEL-
SHHHH JUST SMILE AND BE SUPPORTIVE.
TIE, UNTIE! TIE, UNTIE! IT'S SO EASY!
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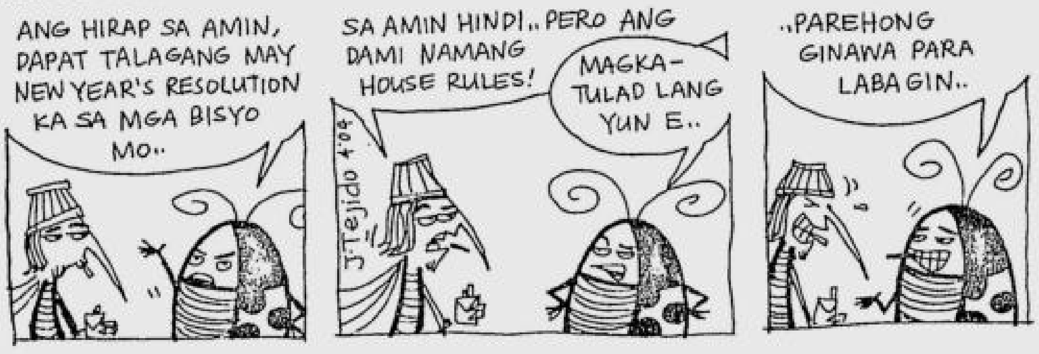
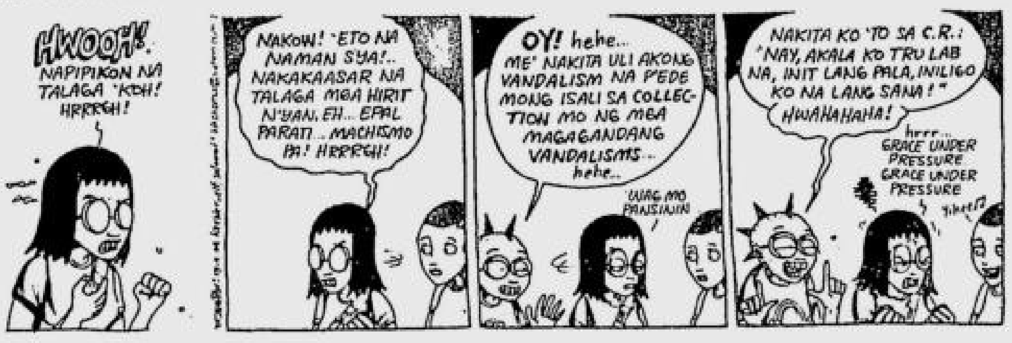
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG HIRAP SA AMIN, DAPAT TALAGANG MAY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION KA SA MGA BISYO MO..
SA AMIN HINDI.. PERO ANG DAMI NAMANG HOUSE RULES!
MAGKATULAD LANG YUN E..
..PAREHONG GINAWA PARA LABAGIN..
J. Tejido 4'04

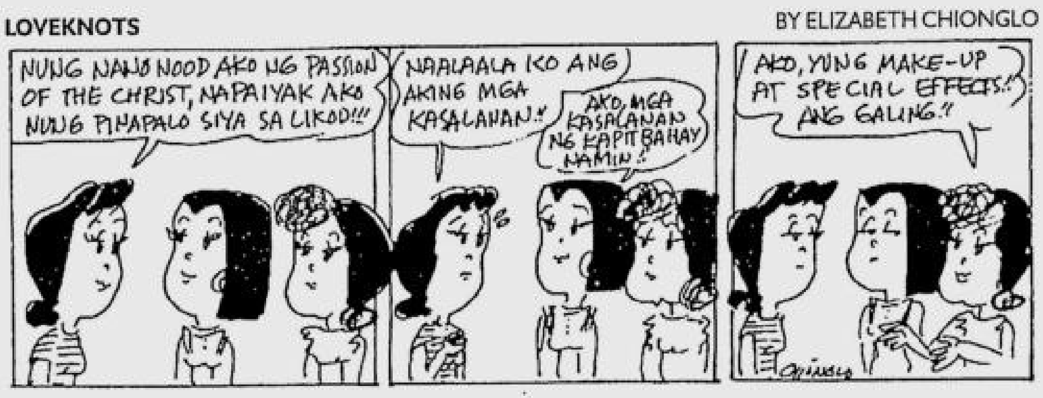
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH!
NAPIPIKON NA TALAGA 'KOH! HRRRGH!
NAKOW! 'ETO NA NAMAN SYA!.. NAKAKAASAR NA TALAGA MGA HIRIT N'YAN, EH... EPAL PARATI... MACHISMO PA! HRRRGH!
OY! hehe... ME' NAKITA ULI AKONG VANDALISM NA PEDE MONG ISALI SA COLLECTION MO NG MGA MAGAGANDANG VANDALISMS... hehe..
WAG MO PANSININ
NAKITA KO 'TO SA C.R.: "NAY, AKALA KO TRU LAB NA, INIT LANG PALA, INILIGO KO NA LANG SANA!" HWAHAHAHA!
hrrr... GRACE UNDER PRESSURE GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

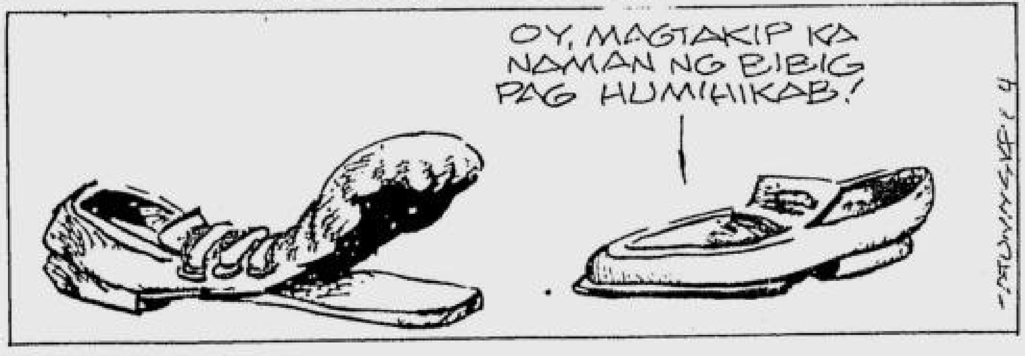
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NUNG NANONOOD AKO NG PASSION OF THE CHRIST, NAPAIYAK AKO NUNG PINAPALO SIYA SA LIKOD!!!
NAALAALA KO ANG AKING MGA KASALANAN.
AKO, MGA KASALANAN NG KAPITBAHAY NAMIN.
AKO, YUNG MAKE-UP AT SPECIAL EFFECTS! ANG GALING.
Chionglo

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


OY, MAGTAKIP KA NAMAN NG BIBIG PAG HUMIHIKAB!

The Escorial of the south

From page F1

dent in the parish church where a stained glass painting of St. Dominic, founder of the Order of Preachers, sits on the right side of the church portal. Across the church is the José Rizal Shrine, the birthplace of the national hero and Calamba's favorite son. Although Rizal went to the Ateneo Municipal for his high school education, he took up the entrance exams at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Intramuros. The University of Santo Tomas, another Dominican institution, had deputized Letran to administer such exam since UST was the bureau of education at that time. Rizal himself was an alumnus of UST.

While Letran-Manila was founded in 1625 and is the oldest school in the country after UST (established in 1611), Letran-Calamba is of a more recent vintage. It was established only in 1979 as an extension campus of Letran-Manila, which had been placed in the control of the Filipino Dominicans. The Spanish Dominicans had earlier ceded the land where Letran-Calamba now stands to their Filipino brethren. In 1986, Letran-Calamba became autonomous from Letran-Manila.

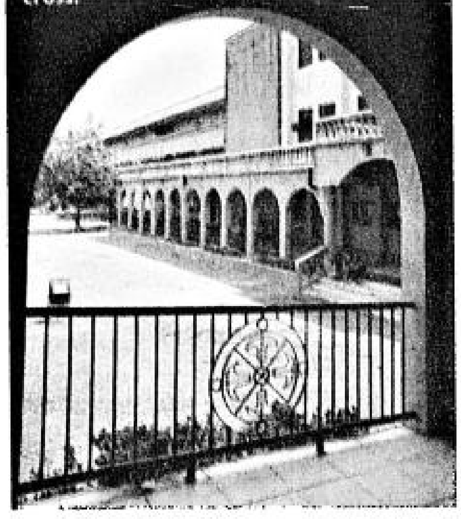
But while of more recent origins, Letran-Calamba joins other Dominican institutions in the country in its architectural and aesthetic integrity. Letran-Manila is distinguished by its Spanish-style architecture. Ditto with UST, whose main building, designed and constructed by the Spanish Dominican engineer, Fray Roque Ruaño, is a Manila landmark, noted for its massive proportion and its monumental tower peaked by the UST cross that is seen from various points of the city. The same Hispanic tenor is reflected in the modern Santo Domingo Church in Quezon City, which was constructed along the lines of a Spanish missionary church and *convento*.

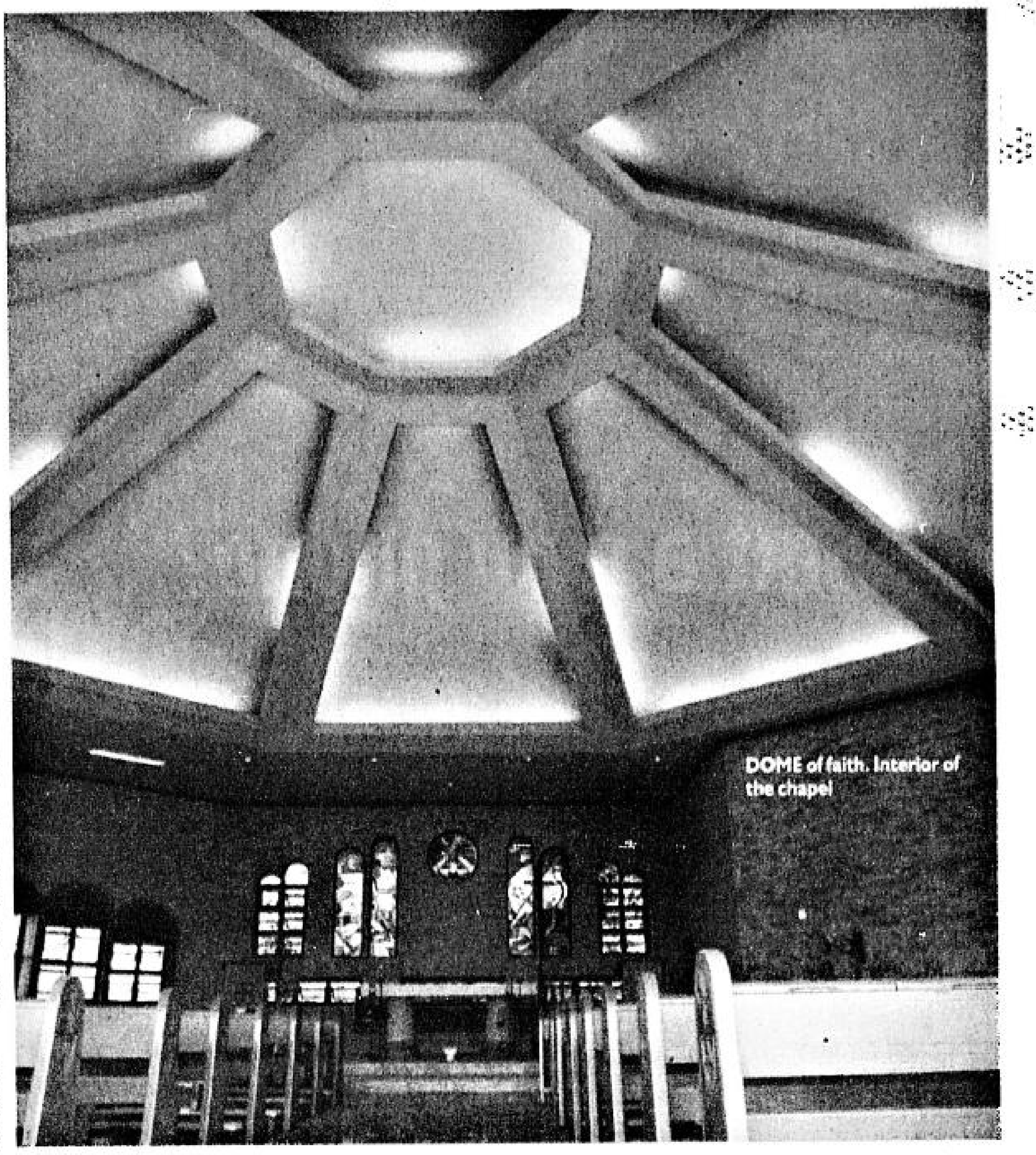
Center of learning

Letran-Calamba echoes all of the above characteristics. The showcase is the majestic main building that drew its inspiration from Spain's El Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial, or the Escorial, which was built by Philip II to commemorate the Spanish victory over the French at the battle of St. Quinten in 1557. Now the mausoleum of the Spanish monarchs, the Escorial is really a complex of functions: it is a monastery, a church, a college, a gallery and museum, and a library of ancient books and manuscripts. Thus, Letran-Calamba reaffirms the Spanish legacy and the Catholic heritage in its magnificent architectural conception. Like the Escorial, it is a center of learning, art, the humanities and spirituality.

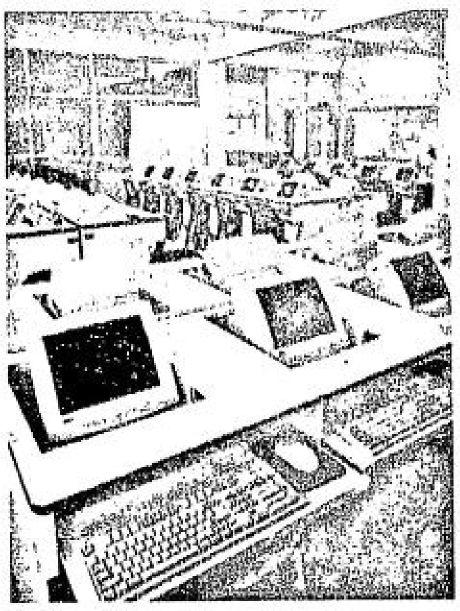
And like Moorish-inspired Spanish architecture, the main building opens up to a green courtyard or a quadrangle inside. The lobby entrance in fact frames the silhouette of Mt. Makiling much like a painting of a landscape would. The effect is nothing short of dramatic. Quite refreshing, too.

COLUMNS frame a view of the elementary and high school building. Grillwork molds the well-known Letran seal that is a reworking of the Dominican cross.

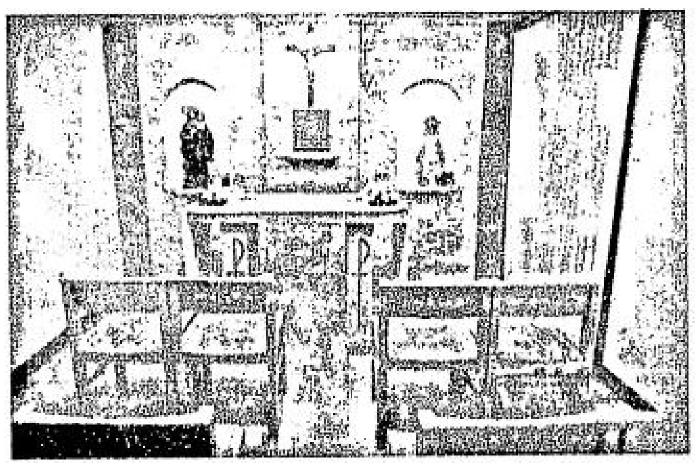




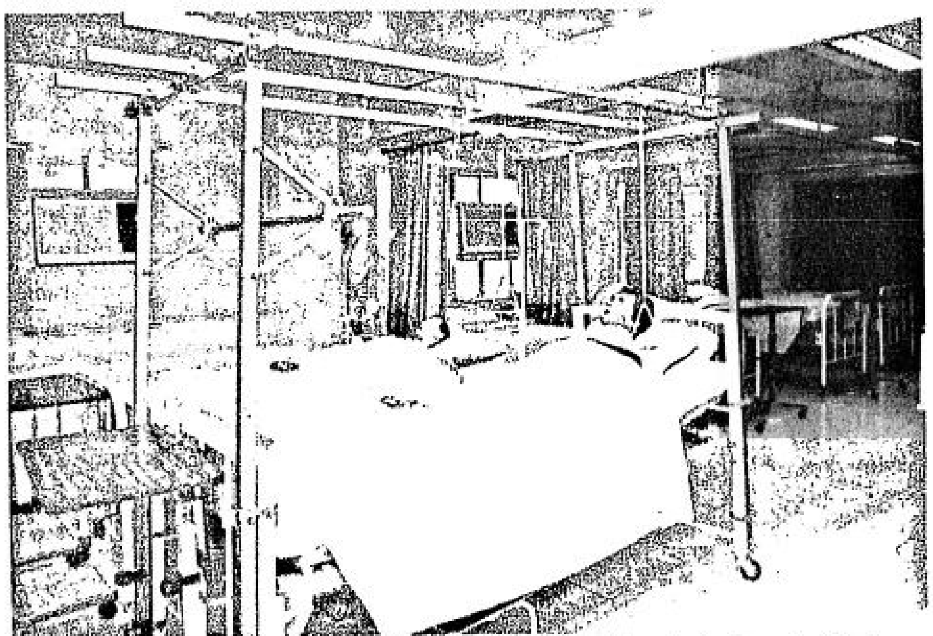
DOME of faith. Interior of the chapel



COMPUTER facilities in the IT building

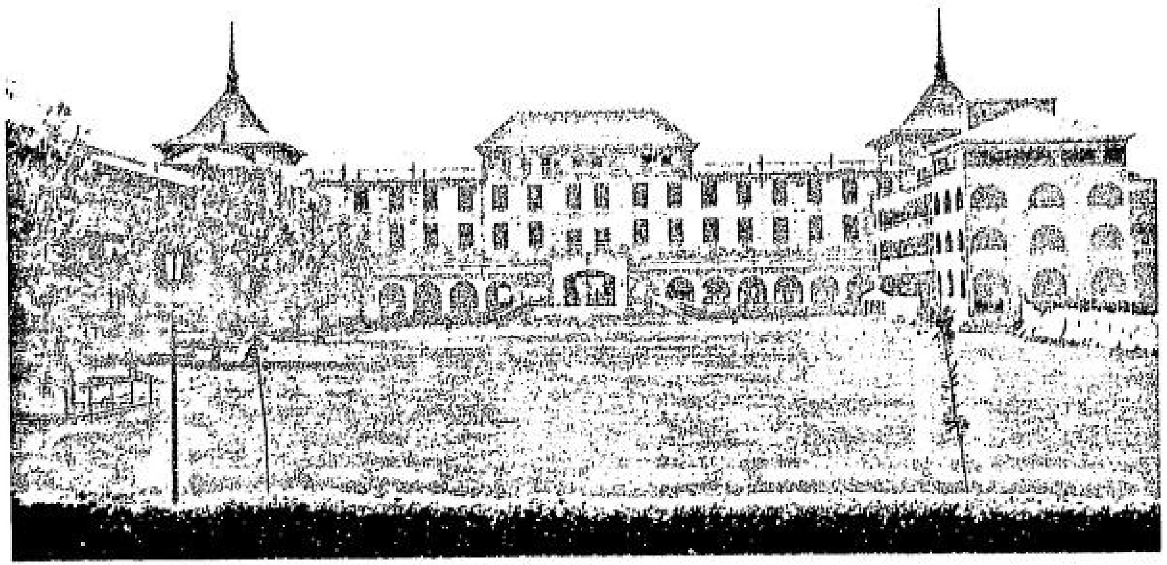


INTERIOR of the Oratory, which is always packed with students on the eve of exams



NURSING laboratory with modern facilities such as simulated hospital beds and patients

LETRAN rector-president Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, O.P. in his glass-paneled office showing a view of the chapel and the misty silhouette of Mt. Makiling



THE BACK of the main building opens up to the quadrangle.

At the center of the quadrangle by the foot of Makiling is the chapel, adumbrating the church of the Escorial by its immense dome in stone and the severity of its Doric simplicity. Its choice location reflects the centrality of the faith in any Catholic institution.

Modern facilities, programs

Although Hispanic and classical in spirit, the buildings on campus house modern facilities. At the right of the main building is the three-story student center, which lodges student clubs that give Letran-Calamba a vibrant spirit amid the discipline and austerity of its neoclassic structures. At the left is the campus's newest building, which houses computer and electronic communication facilities. Letran-Calamba may as well be the cyber Escorial.

Rising at the left of the quadrangle inside is the four-story library building, the brainchild of the current rector-president of Letran-Calamba, Fr. RolandoV. de la Rosa, O.P. Writers and academics who know de la Rosa as the dynamic rector magnificus of UST in the 1990's and the National Book Award-winning historian and scholar will not be surprised that he is behind the new construction. "The library is the heart of a university," he said.

De la Rosa has also introduced curricular and research innovations in Letran-Calamba by trying to build on the strengths of the school in engineering, the sciences, and education. (The school has become the foremost source of engineers and other professionals for industries in the progressive Calabarzon [Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon] region. Its science and mathematics-oriented elementary and high school departments are the best in the province.) He has established a Nursing school that is affiliated with the UST Hospital and the UST College of Nursing. He has set up the Institutional Research Program to conduct relevant studies on the Southern Tagalog region and network with other research-based institutions.

All of these academic and research activities are conducted along the lines of what Letran-Calamba defines as its orientation—an institution that is "Filipino, Dominican and Christian." They are carried out in an environment of lush natural splendor, aesthetic elegance and spiritual zeal. In addressing the multifaceted character of learning (its environmental, cultural, social, moral, artistic, and sacramental dimensions) and in the universality of its pedagogy, Letran-Calamba is clearly a "catholic" institution.

Colegio de San Juan de Letran is located at Bucal, Calamba, Laguna. Call (049) 5451829 or -5453. Visit www.letran-calamba.edu.ph

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The life and times of Gabriel P. Formoso, top Filipino architect

FROM THE '50s to the '80s, one of the more prominent figures in Philippine architecture was Gabriel P. Formoso. A post-modernist by inspiration but wholly Filipino in orientation, Formoso was one of those who helped to define modern Filipino building design.

He built houses for presidents and business tycoons. He designed for corporate empires and government institutions. His works influenced many architects and students of architecture.

He was mentor to the architects in his firm and the students in his classes at the University of Santo Tomas, an innovator when it came to the execution of his designs, and a paragon of ethics when it came to dealing with clients and suppliers.

Among his more popular designs were the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas complex, the Asian Institute of Management building, the Pacific Star Building, the Baguio Country Club, Alabang Country Club, Valley Golf Club, the Manila Peninsula Hotel, Manila Garden Hotel (now the Dusit Hotel), the Regent of Manila (the Heritage Hotel today) and the Far East Bank Building.

In commemoration of his life and work, the Gabriel P. Formoso Foundation Inc. is publishing the coffee table book "Gabriel P. Formoso—The Man, His Works, His Legacy."

The book is the foundation's initial project, the proceeds of which will go to a scholarship fund for talented but underprivileged students of architecture and the design arts.

The foundation is a non-stock non-profit organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Its board includes Ambassador Eduardo M. Cojuangco, former Public Works Secretary David M. Consunji, managing partner of GF and Partners Ricardo M. de la Rosa, architect Rogelio Villarosa, Virginia A. Zamora, Patricio L. Lim, lawyer Manuel Z. Gonzalez and Formoso's children Ma. Erlinda Formoso-Quimson and Roberto A. Formoso.

For the book project, the foundation has tapped the services of Chelo Banal-Formoso as editor, Manila Bulletin columnist and Gawad CCP awardee Monnette E. Alfon as writer-researcher, and Mandy Navasero as photographer.

Slated for launch in November, "Gabriel P. Formoso—The Man, His Works, His Legacy" will also give the inside story behind the designs of some of the more innovative buildings and residences Formoso created.

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